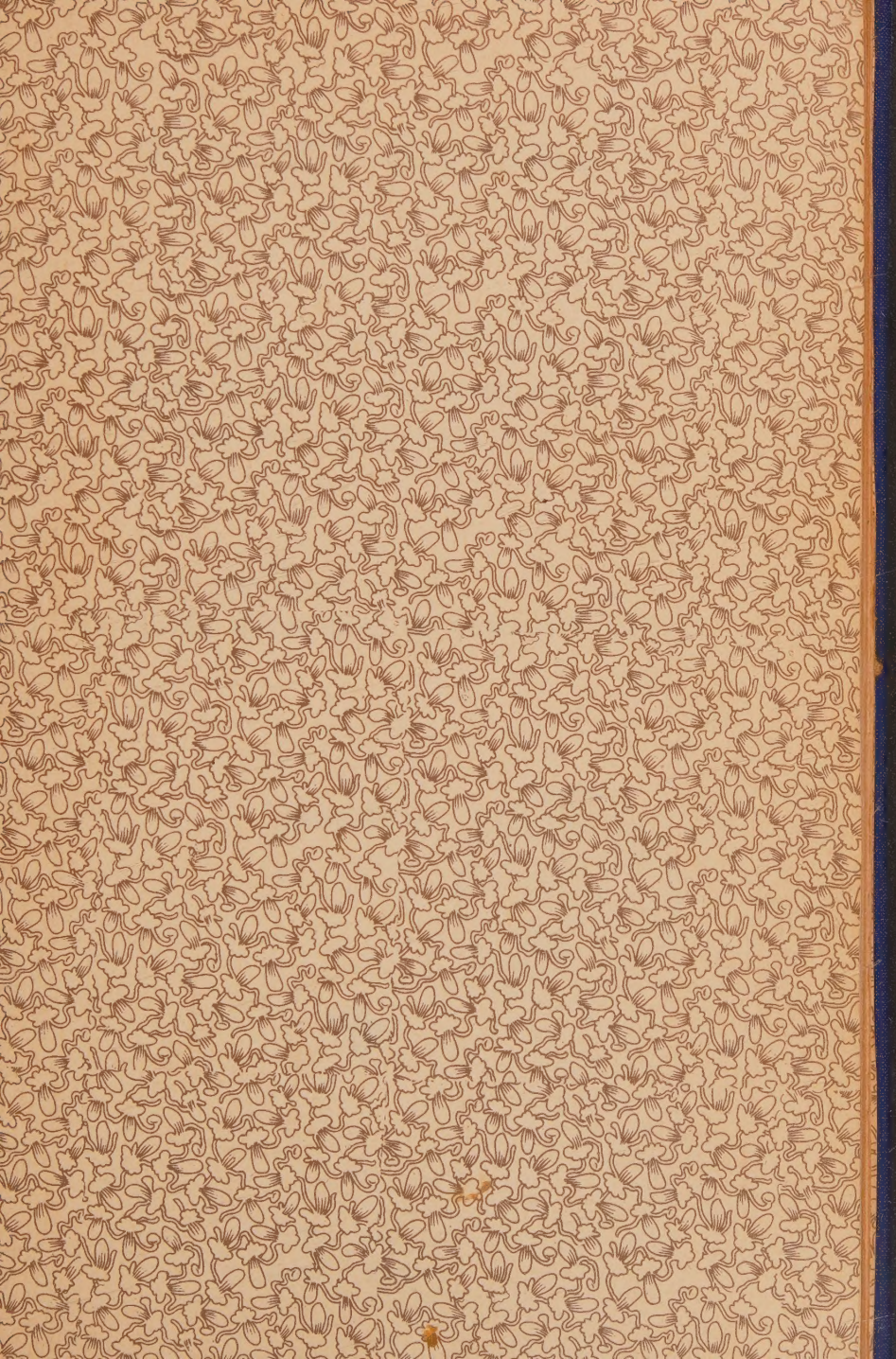






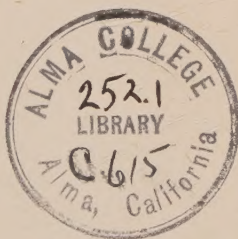
A Year's Sermons

A Complete Course of Original Sermons, Chiefly
on the Gospels, for the Sundays and
some Feast Days of the Year

C. Clifford + al.

BY PULPIT PREACHERS OF OUR OWN DAY

(Second Series)



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A Year's Sermons.

(SECOND SERIES.)

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

BY THE REV. C. CLIFFORD.

"Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord God, in thine own blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nationality; and thou hast made us to become a kingdom unto our God."—Apoc.

SYNOPSIS.—*The liturgical year an expression of our religious duties. To-day's feast not very old but very important. The doctrine of Community of Saints as understood by our forefathers—The gradual development of the spiritual community. The meaning in a broad sense of the term saint. We, on earth, may be saints in this sense. The false view held of a saintly life. The proper view. The first and most important lesson of this feast is that all may become saints. The doctrine of the Unity and Catholicity of Christ's Church taught by this feast. The parables of Christ; the action of the Popes and general councils in reference to this unity. The share the apostles had in working for this unity and Catholicity. Man not made for himself. The family—society—the state and Christ through His Church, all have claims on him. The preaching of Our Lord shows the same truth. The good things of God's bestowal were won in common, therefore should be shared in common. The same idea inculcated by the parable of the "Kingdom" so frequently used by Christ. Steadfast loyalty and active membership demanded in order to share the benefits won by Our Captain. Conclusion—Admire the saints and imitate them.*

The whole of the Christian year is, on its liturgical side, but a commemoration of God's gifts to us in Christ and of our manifold obligations, whether of duty or gratitude, in return; and thus to follow the ecclesiastical calendar devoutly, that is, with a prompt and ready service of the heart, is to fulfil our religion. Viewed under this aspect the festivals of the Church have something more than a holiday meaning. Each one of them carries its message, and lays its particular burden, entreatingly or inexorably, as the case may be, upon the consciences of Catholics. The feast which we celebrate to-day is not a very old one, as feasts are reckoned in the Roman usage, but it is a very important one, and on its inner and spiritual

side it carries us back to the vision vouchsafed to the writer in the Apocalypse, and reminds us of that article of the creed of which we make profession each day of our lives when we say: *I believe in the communion of saints.*

What is the communion of saints, and how is the thought of it linked to this November feast? If we consult the earlier formularies of the creed we shall find that our forefathers in the faith understood by these words a certain common share that all Christians enjoyed in the treasury of the Church, or the "riches of Christ," as the apostle calls it. Their fellowship with one another was grounded in their baptism in our Lord. Having become His members they were made members likewise of one another, and so entitled to their part in the "good things He had prepared for them." And so there arose this idea of a community of spiritual goods in which the sacraments, conceived of as channels of grace, came first, and the strong prayers and works of the elect occupied a second place. But very soon in the history of the Church's devotions there grew up side by side with this original idea the thought of another communion or fellowship—the fellowship, that is, which most of us think of when we invoke the saints and ask their intercession in prayer. The faithful on earth turned instinctively to the faithful in heaven. Death, it was felt, had not sundered the ties that had begun in baptism. On the contrary, it had served to draw them closer and make them inconceivably more effective. The departed saints whose names first appeared in the authentic lists or dyptichs and of whom commemoration was made during the offering of the Holy Eucharist, fulfilled a higher purpose than that of furnishing a theme and pattern of faithfulness to those who remained behind in this world. They became helpers and patrons and ministers of grace, as they had been co-workers and sufferers. This view of their office and character in our Lord's kingdom existed in germ from the very beginnings of associated Christian worship, though it may have been left for later ages to develop it to its full and consoling consequence.

While the saints lived and toiled among their spiritual kindred their right to be accounted holy was grounded in the first instance in their redemption; but after their death the same right or title was conceived of as being more wonderfully divinized by the transforming power of the beatific vision. *Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in thine own blood!* That cry of the redeemed, as the Seer

heard it in Patmos, implies as much; and it is as full of inspiration to all of us who listen to it to-day, as it is surely full of mystery and knowledge not yet completely understood. We are all saints in the measure in which we have rendered that first ransom operative by the exercise of our own good will. We Catholics sometimes speak of the elect and of the saints in glory as though they were a class who stood apart from ourselves. We think of them, indeed, as sharing our fallen nature; but we view them as enaureoled with a kind of reflected divine splendor which transmutes that original weakness of theirs into something above our power to conceive. But we need constantly to remind ourselves that if they were redeemed, so were we. If their destiny has set them above the sordid failures of this earth so has ours. Like the host described in the Epistle of to-day's Mass we bear upon our foreheads the sign and the seal of our nobility in Christ. When we were young the words of the Catechism were imprinted on our memories. We were told of the indelible character stamped upon us when the waters of baptism flowed upon our brows. We were adopted forever as God's children; we became His peculiar property and possession, wearing a new likeness to Him in our hearts for all time. In this sense the humblest of us, provided he be free from mortal sin, does not differ substantially from the greatest canonized saint in the Roman calendar; and when we have brought that terrible truth home to ourselves we have realized the first and, perhaps, the most important lesson inculcated in the Feast of All Saints. There is a necessity laid upon each one of us to be holy, first, because we have been allowed to share in a separate and personal way in the fruits of our Lord's redemption, and secondly because we are members of His Church, and, as such, participate, not merely in her earthly privileges and obligations, but also in the riches which she has heaped up for herself in heaven, where our Lord presents the elect to His Father as evidence that His Passion was not endured in vain.

But the doctrine of the Communion of Saints is not adequately explained by dwelling solely upon considerations like these. It has a wider and a more significant connotation. It reminds us of one of the most characteristic marks of the Church in a world in which the devil, aided by the mistakes of human frailty, has set up many counterfeits of her. The hymn of the redeemed to which our text refers is further described as going up before the throne of God

from *every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nationality*. It is a universal homage, the *Te Deum* of the Church Triumphant glorifying God for that note of Catholicity which is the proof at once of the Father's unrestricted mercies and her own intolerance of the schisms that end in spiritual isolation, in heresy and death. In the view of revealed religion which we Catholics hold there are few dogmas which stand separate and alone. Every article of our creed springs from and is related to some more central truth. This is what one would expect from a Church whose future was foretold by her divine Founder under the parables of the mustard seed and the "leaven leavening the whole mass." It helps us to understand, too, why Popes and General Councils have been so zealous to safeguard the least jot or tittle of our traditional teaching. We expand and grow; we throw off husks; but we surrender nothing that is essential to the ever upward and outward flow of that original sap of life which is needed "for the healing of the nations." The doctrine of the Communion of Saints is only another form of saying that as God is one so is His Christ one; and as His Christ is one so is His Church one, and all her ordinances one. *One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all!* Sanctification is not of the Jews alone; for in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek nor barbarian, bond nor free. We are one in Him, or we are nothing. He has told us how that unity may alone be kept. *Holy Father, keep them one.* If there is a Communion of Saints and sacred privileges to give comfort to our hearts to-day, it is because the apostles, who first received the commission to extend them, were careful to do so under the forms of a religious discipline which may look like a heavy and intolerable yoke to the unbeliever, but which the children of the household submit to as the visible symbol of the unseen yoke of Christ. How a thought like that should brace and fortify one in an age like the present, which accounts certain races as moribund and backward and hardly deserving of notice, save as outlets for industry and trade! White, black, or brown, redskin or tawny, we are all brethren in Christ, and we hail the great Church Catholic as our Mother. Through her we have fellowship with the lowliest as well as the lordliest; and we are never so like our Head and Master as when we escape out of the narrow intolerance of heart that blood, or race, or nationality may beget in us. It is a great truth, and one to be insisted on at all times, that we do not belong to ourselves. What man can afford

to ignore his kind? Our families claim us; society claims us; the State claims us; the world at large claims us. But over and above them all Christ claims us with a sweet insistence that can be understood only when we submit to His Church. She is the expression of His inner mind and heart; and woe to us if we do not hear her! She reminds us to-day: *that out of every tribe, and tongue, and nationality her Lord's witnesses must come; and His witnesses are the saints, whose very variety, bewildering as it may seem, is still the most living argument for that unity which is Catholicity in action.*

If this seems a hard or impracticable theory of belief, let us remember that other word of the text which we have chosen as illustrating the idea of the Communion of Saints. *Christ our Lord hath made us to become a kingdom unto our God.* It was not without design, surely, that the sacred writer in the Apocalypse described the great company of the elect, in whose intercessions we are permitted to share, as a kingdom organized by Christ under His Father's sovereignty. We understand why it should be so. The whole drift and purpose of the kind of religion our Lord preached while on earth was that no man should stand apart, but that he should live for his neighbor almost as unselfishly as he was certainly bound to live for God. The moment we admit that, how compelling does the idea of an hierarchical Church become! The good things of God's bestowal are shared in common, because they were won in common. The human nature of Christ, which could work and suffer, was joined to the divine nature which could work, but not suffer; and we, who are His brethren, member now for member, are made the beneficiaries of that ineffable union. *My Father worketh hitherto; and I also work,* He cries, and every sanctified soul in His Church repeats the inspiring boast. Our prayers and travail are His, even before they are our own; and because we have joined our wills to His in baptism and renounced the devil with his works and pomps, we know that our efforts are not without fruit. We have become like to Him and we toil, not for ourselves, but for the Church, which is enriched by such associated service.

Some such idea as this seems to lurk in that world-old metaphor of the "kingdom" which our Lord loves to employ when urging our duties upon us. A kingdom implies a rule and a regimen, as well as a king; and our Lord's favorite similitude is no exception

to the general law. Do we dwell habitually on the notion that we can only win the right to call ourselves Catholics and therefore sharers in the treasury of this spiritual empery which is the Church, by the practise of a steadfast loyalty to our King and Captain who is Christ? We shall never realize our individual share in the Communion of Saints unless we live in habitual obedience to the polity upon which it depends. And the law of science is twofold in its outlook. It regards the Church or fellowship of the saints; and it regards ourselves and our secret relations with Christ, our Lord. No kingdom has meaning for the solitary subject save in so far as he reproduces it first in his own heart, and lives by its spirit. Out of that attitude of soul loyalty is born; and loyalty that is not personal is little better than a lie. And so we are brought at last to this supreme rule of conduct, that if we would not be mere aliens in heart to the kingdom of Christ, we must live in active fellowship with all the saints, and in still holier fellowship with the King of Saints, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every feast day, as we suggested at the beginning of these remarks, carries its own message to the Catholic soul; and this is the message of the mystery we commemorate to-day. It is good, therefore, to glorify the saints, good to invoke them; but it is best of all to endeavor to be like them. If imitation is the nobler part of worship, we shall not suffer the story of their triumphs to pass out of memory like a tale soon told, but we shall try to bring home to our own struggling consciences the lesson as we have learned it. So shall we make good our title to fellowship and have part in those continued triumphs of the Precious Blood of which the elect, after all, are our Lord's most glorious hostages.

THE FEAST OF ALL SOULS'.

BY THE REV. A. P. DOYLE, C.S.P.

"Because with the Lord there is merciful forgiveness and with him plentiful redemption."—Ps. cxxix. 7.

SYNOPSIS.—Separation a very sad part of the penalty of death. To-day's feast unites us again with our dead ones. This feast based on the existence of purgatory. The Church teaches the existence of a middle state of purgation. Human frailty—God's justice and mercy demand such a state. The instincts of the heart and world-wide prayers offered up for the dead prove that there is a purgatory. The severity of the punishment seen from the loss—namely, the deprivation of happiness so desired and so appreciated—seen also from analogy of deprivation in natural order—also from testimony of St. Catherine of Genoa. Conclusion.—Pray incessantly for the souls in purgatory. Rewards.—Consolation of heart and making of true friends at the throne of God.

There is no sweeter feast in all the year than the one that is dedicated to the remembrance of the souls who have gone before us with the sign of the faith. The saddest thing about death is its separation. We can easily reconcile ourselves to the fact that death must come, and that when it does come it will lay its blighting hand on all that is beautiful and vigorous. But it is when it takes from our side a companion—when it takes out of our life one who has been intimately associated with it, it is then that the keen cut of its knife blade is felt. To go about our daily life and to see no more the face we loved, to sit down to table and hear no more the voice that was as music in our ears—herein lies the sting of death.

The feast of All Souls' brings with it the sweetest religious consolations, because on this day particularly are we united again with those whom we have loved.

The custom of praying for the dead is based on the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. The Church teaches that there is a middle state of souls suffering for a time on account of their sins and that by our suffrages we can alleviate their pains and hasten on their entrance into heaven. This doctrine creates a bond of mutual helpfulness between those whom death has separated, and though death has taken them out of our lives, yet by the custom of praying for them they live again.

Purgatory is a part of God's mercy to men. They who deny

the existence of purgatory are thrown into the terrible dilemma of denying either God's mercy or the eternity of the sufferings of hell. If there be no middle state in the next world God is obliged to punish with an endless suffering the little imperfections of our nature, or He must deprive hell of its eternity, which would practically make it a purgatory. In the scheme of revelation there must be a purgatory. There must be a place where the justice of God may be satisfied. There must be a place where the soul may be purified before it can be permitted to enter into the Holy of holies. After traveling over the dusty roads of this life there must be a place where the dust begrimed traveler may wash, where he may be clothed in clean linen, where he may be fitted in some sense to sit down at the heavenly banquet. There must be a place, too, where the Christian may awaken in his soul the deepest desires for the heavenly vision. Religious thoughts touch us but lightly on this earth. The things of life consume our senses. We hear of the joys of heaven and the bliss of the blessed, but it will be only after we have had a glimpse of the face of God that we shall begin to develop a soulful yearning for the possession of God. The imprisonment of purgatory will but intensify this longing so that when we do come into our Father's house we shall appreciate all that it furnishes us of joy and pleasure.

All the world has realized the need of this place of purification, because no matter where you look you will find, the world over, in every religion at all time, a custom of praying for the dead. We can scarcely count modern Protestantism as an exception to this universal rule, for even among Protestants the wisest and best have prayed for their dead. The dictates of the human heart are so strong that even the prejudices of religion can not smother them. If God will listen to our prayers for our friend when he is dying, He will surely listen to them when he is dead. A place of purgation, then, must of a necessity be reckoned in the divine economy.

As to the character of the sufferings of those who are detained in this place of purgation they must of a necessity be severe. The souls who are there have seen their lives in the white light that cometh from the throne of the Judge. They have measured their abuse of graces. They have counted the opportunities that have been lost and the temptations that they have yielded to. Their conscience has been awakened as never before, and the sight of God has given them an altogether new intelligence concerning the

means of grace and the value of opportunities and a new measure of the boundless mercy of God. The same clear light has revealed the heinousness of sin and how treacherous and disloyal they have been in the house of their Friend. All this remorse for lives that were full of possibilities, is the keenest agony of the suffering soul. There are other sufferings to be added to this. For though these souls are united with God in love and are in the Temple of His mercy, still His justice must do the work of purification. When He came into the Temple and found the buyers and sellers defiling the outer courts, the zeal for His house filled Him with anger, and He took a scourge of small cords and He lashed them. So it is in purgatory, the justice of God lashes the poor souls who have made the house of the heavenly Father a house of traffic, who have defiled the temple of their souls by bartering with the evil one. Moreover there may be added to these sufferings another, and that is the fact that they are in prison. There imprisonment is all the more grievous because they have tasted of freedom. It is all the harder to bear because they have had a glimpse of the inner courts of the Lord. When Peter and James and John saw the half opened door, so satiated were they with a sight of the glory of heaven that they would stay by it all the days of their life. When St. Paul was wrapped up with highest heavens and saw the things that it was not lawful for him to speak, he ever after considered even the richest jewels of this earth but dirt. So with the exile soul in purgatory. He has seen the face of God and his heart has been enlarged by its desires for heaven. But he is in exile. He is held down by the weight of his penances when he would fly to the bosom of God.

God is the life of the sanctified soul as light is the life of the eyes or as air is the breath of the lungs. What agony for the eye to be deprived of the light, what suffering to have the air crushed from the lungs. So the poor soul who is held away from the God it loves and from the happiness it eagerly yearns for. St. Catherine of Genoa expresses this suffering in purgatory in one of her most powerful prayers. She says: "If there were in the whole world but a single loaf of bread, the mere sight of which was destined to appease the hunger of all creatures, and if a man who had that desire to eat which is natural to all of us in a normal state of health, yet could not satisfy it, and yet though deprived of all food could neither die nor fall sick, is it not clear that he would

suffer a hunger that was always increasing? Suppose this man to know the single loaf in question could alone by his seeing it satisfy him, and that without it he would remain in his hunger in a state of intolerable torture, is it not evident that the nearer he came to that loaf without being able to look upon it the more would his hunger be provoked and that his torments would be all the more cruel in proportion as his appetite yearned with greater force for the sight of the loaf, the single object of his desire? And again, if in the midst of this torture of hunger devouring him always more and more as time went on this man were to acquire the dreadful certainty that he was never again to see that loaf, what would take place? He would at once feel the beginning of hell within himself: he would from that moment be as are the souls of the damned who have lost all hope of seeing the Bread of Life, God their Saviour. Well, then, the hunger which this man would feel is precisely that which the souls in purgatory experience, with the exception of the despair—for they have the hope that they shall one day see that loaf and satisfy themselves with it as they will. But the hunger and martyrdom which they suffer are something which can not be described as long as it is not given them to fill themselves with the Bread of Life which is Jesus Christ the true God, our Saviour and our Love" (St. Catherine, *Treatise on Purgatory*, c. 6).

The contemplation of the suffering of the poor souls in purgatory softens our heart in sympathy for them. We seem to hear them cry out as Holy Job cried out: "Have pity on me, at least you my friends." In their pleading for our suffrages they look to us with piteous cries; we are the ones above all others who can help them. If they were still with us on earth and were suffering, what is there we would not do for them? If they were tossing on a bed of pain we would stay by them night and day, to cool their parched brow; if they were in prison we would give up our comfort and sacrifice our time to bring to them the consolations of friendship; if they were in danger of physical peril we would sacrifice even our lives to save theirs. In the place of purgation they are just as surely lying on a bed of suffering, racked with pain, they are just as surely confined in the prison of the King. Our eagerness to help them should be correspondingly great.

It has its rewards. Besides the consolation of knowing that we have released one whom we love, when that one comes before the throne, we shall find in him a friend who will be interested in

our own salvation. "Blessed is the man who has found a good friend." There is no place where we shall need a friend so much as before the throne of grace.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS.

BY THE REV. P. A. SHEEHAN, D.D.

"Set your hearts on all the words which I testify to you this day; which you shall command your children to observe and to do."—Deut. xxxii. 46.

SYNOPSIS.—*I. Responsibility of Parents. 1. Compared with Guardian Angels. 2. With Priests. 3. The Worth of a Soul.*

II. The Soul of the Child. Baptismal Innocence. Natural Faith and Piety.

III. Scandal from parents. What the loss of innocence means. Exhortation.—Keep the children saints.

There is no one, dear brethren, who has not felt from time to time how awful are the responsibilities that are imposed upon Christians in this world. It is often a relief to rush away from the agony of meditation to the distractions of the world, just as it is a mercy on the part of God to wean us from morbid thoughts about this world and the next by the practical questions that arise before us every moment to be solved. It is, dear brethren, an awful thing to have a soul to save, it is the most momentous business about which any one could be employed, it is the most solemn mission that could be undertaken, it is the most burdensome responsibility that could be incurred. The alternative proposed to us is so dreadful, and our chances fluctuate so often, the nature that misleads us being at one moment triumphant, and at another the grace that is to save us, that if we do not wilfully blind ourselves our lives here on earth must be spent in a state of constant apprehension and fear. And if this be said of those who have only their own souls to save, what shall be said of those, to whose charge are committed the souls of others, who have undertaken the responsibility of saving those souls who have cast in their lot, as it were, with the fates of others and virtually make a contract with God to bring those souls

to His feet in heaven and there accept a common reward, or to suffer the penalty of eternal banishment from God with those souls, whom they have robbed of the happiness of seeing God for ever? I am not speaking, dear brethren, of priests, I am speaking of those whose responsibility is greater than that of any priest, the fathers and mothers of families.

Like all sacred and sublime offices the care of children involves the most serious and solemn responsibilities. The duties of any office become serious in proportion to its dignity. The higher God exalts us, the more does God expect from us in return. And if this be true, how serious are the duties of parents, who, in regard to the souls under their care are the vicegerents of God, the guardians of treasures, which God has bought at the dear price of the Blood of His Son. They have been deputed to train up these souls and fit them for heaven, and to win countless victories for God by foiling the efforts of the arch enemy to get possession of them. The parents of a family are to that family in the flesh what the guardian angels of the family are in the spirit. A spirit is selected by God at our birth to be ever present at our side, to whisper inspirations, to breathe warnings into our ears, to shield us from evil, to lead us to God; but we need, too, a being of flesh and blood like ourselves, with sympathies corresponding to ours, with a heart that can feel for us, with a mind to direct us, and that is the father or mother whom God has given us. Such then in regard to God and to souls are the dignities and duties of parents. In the eyes of the Church they are auxiliaries, whose importance it would be difficult to exaggerate. To them the Church looks to train up in a way befitting their exalted vocation those who are to be its future members, and who are to bear its name and profess its doctrines before the world. Individual worth or external appearances are not at all necessary to the well-being of the Church; but the Church does expect of its members that they prove themselves worthy of the name they bear and the professions they make. And she looks to parents to educate their children according to her spirit.

These principles being established, the primary vocation of a father and mother is to make the children saints. Everything else must be subordinated to that. Every consideration must yield to that. It is the solemn duty of parents to propose that object to themselves and to attain it, no matter what sacrifice is made. Worldly considerations, worldly views, worldly ambitions must not be allowed for

an instant to distract the attention of parents from that first, chief, most necessary duty of training the souls of their children in the love and service of God. They owe that duty to God, and they owe it to their children. They owe it to God, for they are only His deputies, His servants; and if they fail to do the work He has committed to them, that is, if they fail to make His children saints for heaven, they are guilty of as flagrant injustice toward God as a servant who here upon earth would destroy, or squander, or steal the property of his master. They owe it to their children, because it is a duty just as imperative as to give them food, drink, clothing, and whatever is necessary for the support of the body. Oh, dear brethren, no words can express what I have in my mind this moment. I would to heaven that I could bring you to think as I think myself. I do not know how to express my sense of the awful obligations of parents. It is above all human language. There is not a priest in the world this moment that has not an overpowering sense of his awful responsibilities. He can only bear to think of it in his moments of meditation and then act upon his resolutions. It was dinned into his ears from the moment he took his Latin grammar into his hands, until he was told it in words that burned into his heart when he knelt at the foot of his bishop and was clothed in the awful power of the priesthood. In sermons, in lectures, in passing instructions, in meditation, in his books of theology, in his books of devotion; from the lips of his professor in class, from the lips of his fellow-students even at the time of recreation, from the lips of his confessor in the sacred tribunal; in the texts that were written around the walls of his college; above all in that ever present crucifix so eloquent of the love of God for souls,—so eloquent of the awful justice of God upon soul-destroyers—one lesson was taught; and that was the value of a human soul, and the awful duties of those to whom the care even of a single soul is confided. The last words on which his eyes rested in the books that were familiar to him was that terrible sentence of St. Paul's: "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself but he that is called by God as Aaron was." The last words of his confessor were, "Go forward, my child, but in fear and trembling." The last words of the bishop, "Dearly beloved, again and again you ought to consider, what a burden it is, which to-day you seek to bear, think of it, whilst there is time, and if still you persevere in your determination, in the name of God approach hither." Now why did these men use

such solemn monitions? Was it not cruel to suggest such terrible reflections to those whose own thoughts were hard enough to bear? Why, but because these holy men saw with the clear vision of sanctity into the depths of eternity; they looked through and beyond the phantoms of flesh and blood of this world and saw things in their only true light, that is with the light of heaven shining upon them from above, and the fire of hell glaring upon them from beneath. And what did they see? They saw the beauty of the soul, as it looks to the eyes of God, they measured the value of the soul by the price that God set upon it. They saw that it needed the effort of God's omnipotence to create it, and then when it became blurred and defaced by sin, that it needed the blood of Jesus Christ Himself to restore its beauty. For it the sacraments were instituted and the Church; in a word, it was the work of God which He loved, upon which He had lavished His mercy and His graces, which He purposed to bring to heaven, and he was handing it over to the priests of His Church with all the anxiety of a father to preserve it as spotless as He has given it to them. Furthermore, they knew well what infinite capabilities there are in the soul for joy or for pain; how terrible is the anguish of a soul; how overwhelming is remorse; how sensitive the soul is about its own honor; what a fearful degradation there is in self-contempt; and they felt that in some measure, at least, it rested with the priest of God to prevent sin, and all that anguish and remorse and shame, and therefore they repeated their warnings that God would demand an account of their stewardship, and the soul would demand justice for its own sins and for graces prevented. Were these warnings extravagant? No. Were the duties of the priests exaggerated? No. It was only the barest truth that was told them. And, dear brethren, if I repeated all these solemn warnings and admonitions, day after day for years from this altar, if I applied to parents the very words that are addressed to priests, if I insisted on the duties of parents alone and spoke of no other Christian duties, I should not think myself guilty of extravagance, and if my words on this subject alone were listened to, I should think myself successful beyond all expectation.

You will ask then what do I require? And I answer that I require of parents that they understand the importance and the sublimity of their duties, and then that they act upon that knowledge. I would have them remember that when they receive their child

fresh and pure from the waters of baptism, they contract the most solemn engagements with God to keep that child for Him and for Him alone. It is a poor little stray soul which the love of God has found. He has bought it back by paying for it drop after drop of the Blood of His own Son, and if it were dear to Him in the beginning because it was the work of His hands, it is tenfold dearer to Him now because His Son suffered for it. No care, therefore, that can be expended on the soul of that child can be deemed excessive. Let it be taught the words "Jesus and Mary" even before it can understand them; the poor undeveloped intellect can bear no fruit as yet, but it may contain the seeds of much fruit hereafter; let its hands be mechanically raised to heaven; God will accept the very gesture of prayer for the prayer itself; and at that most critical time when reason is beginning to dawn in the child, let the mother be careful that its first thoughts be given to God, that they be not allowed to grovel upon earth even for a moment; but let the child be educated in the habit of doing everything under the eyes of God, and referring all its thoughts and words and actions to Him. Every child is holy; holiness is natural to childhood. During the period of childhood the Holy Ghost rests in complete, undisturbed possession of the soul. There is not a single obstacle opposed to God's graces; they flow in upon the soul in a stream that is never stopped even by venial sin. The innocence of heaven is in the soul of the child; and it has not a thought or aspiration that does not tend to God. Speak to it of pious things; it drinks in your lessons with avidity. That little soul is no stranger to God, or to His Blessed Mother, or to the Divine Infant; Faith is natural to it. It needs no long, difficult explanations to take in every revealed Christian mystery. The mystery of God made Man, and of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament are familiar to it. They are believed with all the firmness of Divine Faith. Piety is natural to it. Its prayers are not a duty but a pleasure; it listens with unaffected delight to pious conversation, the glories of God or His Blessed Mother, the happiness of virtue, the lives of the saints. Earth and earthly things are strangers to it. It does not understand them; and the peace of God is therefore reigning upon that soul and it is written upon the features of the child. Only a little care is needed, a little care in seconding the efforts of God, only a little guidance, to show it what to avoid; only a little caution in removing the occasion of sin; only a little trouble to preserve it in its

most blessed ignorance of earth and the world and sin, and it might pass through the world unstained, and carry its baptismal innocence to heaven. Baptismal innocence! How many understand that word? How many appreciate that best and holiest gift of God? How many mothers set themselves to the task of preserving the baptismal innocence of their children? Rather must it not be said in our time that Christian or rather un-Christian mothers set them deliberately to the task of destroying the innocence of their children. What words are children accustomed to hear? Conversation that is either frivolous or sinful. What are the first exhibitions they see? Plays and pantomimes. They are taken to the theater before they are brought to the Church. It is much better that they should be clever than pious; much better to carry off the prizes of the world than the prizes of heaven; much better to be taught to idolize themselves than to adore God. The evil that is in the soul is carefully developed by the parent; the devil that was crushed and destroyed in the soul of the child by Emmanuel is summoned out and enthroned again and feted and honored; disobedience is laughed at; disrespect is humbly borne by the foolish parent because the child is so clever; the gray hairs are shamed and the parent never blushes at his dishonor; a premium is set upon stubbornness and ill-temper and obstinacy. Later on, the broken-hearted father or mother comes to the priest, and asks him to repair the ruin which has been made of his child's soul. But it is too late.

Dear brethren, mortal sin in any one is bad enough. But the first mortal sin of the child ought to provoke God to create a new hell not for the poor victim, but for those who led it into sin. There is something inexpressibly painful in contemplating the relapse of a poor sinner after confession upon confession into the same sins. His utter helplessness under the tyranny of a bad passion, the ruin he brings upon himself, and the fearful dishonor he does to God are painful beyond all powers of expression. But these are not to be compared for an instant with the first ruin of the soul of a child. That is the most horrible catastrophe that heaven or earth can witness. Again God's designs are frustrated, again He is disappointed, defeated, dishonored. He said that He would at least have that child to Himself; He would have that soul to love Him perfectly. Men in general only give Him the remains of broken, ruined, wasted lives; but He will have this soul entirely to

Himself, that the sight of its innocence might relieve His Sacred Heart from the burden which men are forever heaping upon it. He has labored for that soul, suffered for it, sent His angels to guard it, He would take it to Himself in its innocence if He may, but He can not; He watches over it with intense anxiety, hoping, desiring that its innocence may not be sullied. And who comes between God and the child? Who is impious enough to break that sacred union? Most often, the very guardians of that child's innocence and purity, the parents, by bad example, or by bringing their children into the occasions of sin. It is they who grieve the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and it is they who first teach their children the unutterable misery of self-contempt, remorse, regret for a good that can never be recovered. For baptismal innocence, once lost, is lost for ever. God Himself could not restore it. Penance brings back innocence, but it is not baptismal innocence, the innocence of a soul that never has been at enmity with God. That priceless gift once lost by mortal sin is irrecoverable. No prayers, no penance will bring it back; for eternity that soul will have to lament that it had the misfortune of having been at enmity with God. It may afterward atone for its sin with bitter penances; it may learn to love God most truly and tenderly; but its relations with God are changed; it can never look upon God as can the soul that has never offended Him; it can never console itself with the blessed assurance that it has kept its baptismal vows inviolate, and never caused a shadow to pass over the face of God in heaven.

Here, therefore, dear brethren, is your vocation. Make your children saints. Train yourselves in the knowledge of these truths I have spoken until you can say with as much truth as the mother of St. Louis, "My son, I had rather see you dead, than know you to have offended God by one mortal sin." Teach them to love virtue by showing its beauty to them in your own lives; let them live as long as possible without the knowledge of vice, and when you can no longer conceal from them the truth that vice does exist show them its hideousness and teach them to hate it. Develop in them the love of God which they have brought from heaven, destroy in them whatever evil was left by sin. Teach them to love the Blessed Mother, the saints, their religion. Bring them up in the habit of coming to Church frequently, of attending not only the Mass of obligation on Sunday, but the daily devotions in Church; make morning and night prayers the regular daily exercise that

can never be dispensed with. Repress firmly and strongly the first motions of evil; teach them reverence for yourselves and for holy things, for reverence is the foundation of all religion; make them obedient and respectful to superiors, gentle and amiable to all without exception. If you have alms to give, let your children give them; teaching them that in the poor we have an ever present image of Christ. Teach them to see God in everything; and above all, keep them from bad or even indifferent companions. Dearly beloved, let me repeat it at the risk of wearying you. God has confided to you treasures whose worth is known only to Himself. You possess a terrible power for good or for evil. If you bring up your children in piety and holiness, your work does not end with your lives. Your children growing up in models of piety will edify others, bring honor upon the Church and draw many souls to God. But the works of the wicked are also traced after them for generations. The devil has agents enough and God has enemies enough in the world. The people of God ought not to add to the numbers

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER IN THE CHURCH.

BY THE REV. THOMAS F. BURKE, C.S.P.

“We give thanks to God always for you all; making remembrance of you in our prayers without ceasing.”—I. Thess. i. 2. (Epistle of the day.)

SYNOPSIS.—1. As St. Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, so the Church always prays for her members. 2. Prayer is a necessary portion of our religion. It is founded upon our belief in (a) God's providential care of men, (b) man's freedom of will, and (c) man's need of God's grace. 3. By word and example Jesus Christ taught the duty of prayer. 4. Our prayers must be for others as well as for ourselves; such prayers are answered. 5. The Church, as the guardian of all, prays for all. The special advantages to be derived from her intercession, and 6. The duty of uniting our prayers with those that ascend to heaven from the Church, especially in her great act of worship, the Mass.

1. Standing upon the shore of the St. Lawrence, my dear brethren, just at the edge of the city of Montreal, there is a small church atop of which rises a statue of the Blessed Virgin that faces the waters. Mary is represented as gazing out over the great river as if

to protect those who sail upon its bosom, and at the same time her hands are outstretched toward heaven imploring that protection from the God who alone can give it. While I gazed upon this evidence of faith and love the thought came to me that this statue was typical of the attitude of the Church toward her children. She is always guiding them in the name of God and always making intercession for them before God who alone can answer her prayers. Thus did St. Paul and his companions, as seen from the words of our text, thank God for the benefits bestowed upon the Thessalonians and likewise pray for their perseverance in the good they had received. From the very beginning the Church has been thus solicitous for the welfare of those entrusted to her care. She thanks God; she petitions God; she implores His mercy upon us all. A thought, therefore, is this, worthy of our consideration, that we have in the prayers of the Catholic, the Universal Church, a powerful means of intercession which we should appreciate more than, I fear, we usually do.

2. If we believe at all in prayer and its answer, surely we can see how valuable and far-reaching must be the petition that the Church, speaking for millions of souls, sends up to God. Prayer is the necessary concomitant of supernatural religion; and its possibility and necessity are denied only by those who question the existence of the supernatural. For us, therefore, who are blessed by God in that we are members of His true Church, prayer should be the most frequent act of our lives. Why is this? Consider what we believe. We believe, in accordance with the great facts of revelation, not that God is a Being who stands apart and manifests no interest in the welfare of His intelligent creatures upon earth, but that He is One who has at heart the salvation of each soul; who is interested not merely in the general outcome of the universe but who also extends His hand of benediction and care over each particular human being. We believe the word of Jesus Christ: "Your Father knoweth you have need of all these things," and in the promise: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." We believe, therefore, that in our Heavenly Father we have One Who is ready to harken unto our voice, to listen to our pleadings, to our tales of affliction, to our cries of distress and need.

We know furthermore, principally from the testimony of our own conscience, that we are possessed of freedom of will; that for

the greater reward and the more resplendent beauty of our service God has determined that it should be freely given; we recognize at once the wonderful dignity and the terrible responsibility of this possession. It is not given to any other earthly creature to serve God as man can serve Him; nor is it given to any other to lose God as man can lose Him. At stake therefore is the eternal possession or the eternal loss of God.

We are convinced also that, since man's fall, the will of man is drawn from God by temptation and by the false attractiveness of sin, that it is allured from that service which the mind and the heart proclaim to be the one fitting object of its acts. Where then is our strength? Our strength is in the God that loves us. Our strength is in the gifts of strength that He can bestow. Our strength is in our weakness; our recognition of our dependence upon God. Our strength is in prayer. For prayer implies and embraces the deepest and most fundamental acts of religion: faith and hope and love, and all these three bespeak our acknowledgment of God's supremacy. To worship God, to thank God, to beg God's forgiveness, to petition God's favors, these are acts of prayer; acts by which the soul of man mounts above the plains of earth to higher realms where it can come close to God its Maker. Prayer is a manifestation of man's littleness and man's dignity. If he be the only creature that needs to pray, it must be remembered that he is the only one that is privileged to pray. It is indeed the consciousness of his own weakness but it is at the same time the consciousness of his immortality that forces him to pray. To bow the head and to bend the knee and, what these outward acts indicate, to submit the heart and will are evidences of lowliness, but of a lowliness that carries with it an immeasurable blessing in that the soul, by its submission, is enabled to rise upon the wings of faith from its earthly abode to regions where it can with child-like affection speak to God.

3. Intimately connected with religion, even in its primary dictates, is the duty of prayer. Our Blessed Saviour insisted upon this duty in word and example throughout His life. "Lord teach us how to pray," was the request of His apostles, and He answered the request by giving the most beautiful prayer that was ever uttered. No prayer will go unheeded, for He has given us the word: "And I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one

that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke xi. 9, 10). His whole life, as if teaching us to pray always, was a life of prayer. When trouble and affliction sought Him out, He went into the mountain to pray; when men admired His wonderful works and in their enthusiasm would make Him their king, He escaped from the multitude and went apart into the wilderness to pray; when trial was upon Him and especially His last great Agony, He sought consolation in prayer, while on the cross His last words were words of prayer: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Yes, let men with the world's learning theorize as they may about the uselessness of prayer: let so called philosophers point out how, in their minds, prayer is against the unchangeable laws of nature, let them in their imaginings, attempt to prove how it is impossible for God to heed any petition that His creatures may make, the facts remain untouched, that, from the beginning of the world, prayers have been answered again and again and that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, God and man, insisted upon this primary duty of His intelligent creatures. All the dreamings that would discountenance religion, all the high-sounding phrases of men that would seek to sap the faith of devoted souls become as mere chaff upon the wind beside the "thanks be to God" rising from out the fervent heart that has spoken to God and has heard the answer. All the theories of a material philosophy fade into insignificance beside the one simple fact of a crucifix erected as a crown to nature's beauty, or within the sacred confines of the House of God, speaking the thankfulness for the prayer that has been heard.

4. Man is made for prayer, as he is made for God; nor does his duty in this matter end with himself. If we are taught to pray, none the less are we taught to pray for others. "The prayer of the just man availeth much," says Holy Writ. Our Blessed Lord, with the dread vision of His cruel death immediately before Him, prayed not only for His chosen ones but for all men of all times. In answer to Abraham's prayer God would have spared Sodom: for David's prayer He forgot the sin of Israel; for Moses' prayer He held back His smiting justice from the idolaters; for the prayer of St. Paul He saved the shipwrecked; and throughout all the history of man upon earth, there is no fact more palpable, except to the eyes that will not see, than the efficacy of intercessory prayer.

But oh! the prayers, especially the prayers for others that are unanswered! No—do not say unanswered; but that seem to remain unanswered. How often do we pray and pray for some afflicted one, wounded in body or in soul; for some one close unto us by the ties of relationship or love; for some one who has tasted the dregs of iniquity; for some one who has lost the gift of faith,—and across the space between this world and the great unknown there comes no answer. Ah! sometimes we are impatient. We do not ask as we should. We are forgetful of that holy importunity in prayer upon which our Blessed Lord insisted. We fail to knock again and again at the gates of God's loving mercy until our ceaseless cry compels an answer. Sometimes we beg for that which we know not; and were it granted would prove our undoing. God hears the cry but gives a different answer; "And which of you if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg will he reach him a scorpion?" The unanswered prayer, in the terminology of men, often means the prayer that is answered differently from the way in which we would have it answered, and better because it is answered according to God's good judgment. No prayer rightly offered for another's good will remain unheard. The grace will be forthcoming in God's time; and if then the grace is refused the fault is not His. Especially is this so when we pray for those who never had, or who have lost or grown weak in the faith. It may be with the quickness of the lightning's flash that the message comes and is heeded; it may be in the revelation that some mighty affliction begets that the light dawns; it may be when this human soul is bowed down in grief that imperiously cries out for God that the answer is granted; it may be when the terrors of the elements proclaim, as the thunders of Sinai, their ruler; or in nature's vast solitudes of forest and mountain and sea, or in the undisturbed silence of a little wayside church when one is forced to kneel and worship that the supernatural power of God acts, and the soul, for which we prayed, subduing its pride, bowing down under a necessity that knows no resistance, yields itself up and asks, as one who was conquered of old: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

5. The Kingdom of God upon earth, His Church, like the true mother that she is, is always praying for her children. The words of St. Paul she speaks to us: "We give thanks to God always

for you all; making remembrance of you in our prayers without ceasing." Like unto her Divine Master and Founder, her heart yearns for human souls; and is ever soliciting the mercy of heaven. If God hearkens to the prayer that rises from the soul of even one of His children, will He not give even a readier ear to the united anthem of the praise of millions, and the irresistible plea of the countless voices that are represented in the prayer of the Church? In the Divine promise: "Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven," did not our Saviour include the power of intercession? If He can not resist the pleading voice of one of His servants, how can He refuse to hear the cry of His Church?

And so she has always prayed for her children. In their name she has spoken their homage and their love, their sorrow and their dependence, their thanksgiving and their petitions. In fact all her services are manifestations of the spirit of prayer that abides in her; and of that solicitude for the individual soul's welfare for eternity. Mayhap, when occasion and circumstance warrant, she prays to God, the Master of all things, for temporal favors, for natural blessings, but these are ever subordinate to her one aim, her one work, the sanctification of each soul and the securing of its eternal goal and destiny. The remembrance of us that she makes in her prayers is that we may know God and love Him. In the mementoes daily offered for the living and the dead; in the masses of Requiem so frequently sent up for the repose of the departed; in the beautiful service of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; in the all-embracing prayers chanted at her altars on Good Friday, in the Feasts of All Souls and of All Saints, we have but a few of the many instances of the intercessory prayer of the Kingdom of Christ on earth that goes up to the throne of the King in heaven.

6. The members of a religious community share in the benefits accruing to the prayers of the whole body: the members in a Sodality or League or any devotional body participate in the prayers of all: in like manner every Catholic is not left to his own individual efforts, but, through his membership in the Church, he obtains entrance into the treasury of which she is the guardian; he becomes the object of her solicitude; he shares in the favors that are granted to her as to the Kingdom of Christ on earth. From this sublime fact and mighty truth, one lesson at least we can derive, that of the union of our prayers with those of the Church

that is making remembrance of us in her prayers without ceasing. Whatever the favor we desire, whether for ourselves or for others, whether spiritual or temporal, whether for a stronger faith or a better morality, our request will go before heaven's Throne, strengthened a hundred and a thousand fold, if it be united with the voice of the Church. In that greatest act of religion, entrusted to her care from the beginning, now surrounded by her grand liturgy, guarded by her with a jealousy surpassing that of the King for his throne or the miser for his gold, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the legacy of Christ's love to her sanctuaries, the Church has a prayer which must be heard. Does your soul desire to offer the prayer of worship and homage and yet aware of its own unworthiness, hesitate? It should not hesitate, for it can unite, together with the Church, its praise with the praise of Jesus Christ and no canticle of glory can be sweeter than His before the throne of His Father.

Does your soul long to render thanks to the Bestower of all the goods and all the blessings of life and yet, knowing that it is at the best poor and ungrateful, fear to raise its voice? Let it, together with the Church, unite its thanksgiving with the Holy Eucharist, and the song will ascend to heaven mightier than the "Magnificat."

Does your soul, perhaps deep in the mire of sin, despair of God's pardon, or does it fear it can not atone for its offenses? Let it send up its plea in the voice of the Church united with the Divine Victim in the Mass, and the answer will come as surely as it came upon Calvary, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

Does your soul desire God's blessings and favors, and yet, knowing these are not deserved, draw back from making the petition? Let it send up its cry for mercy and for favor through the Church uniting its prayer with Jesus Christ in the Mass, and the answer must come, for the Victim Himself has said: "Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, that he will give unto you."

This is one of the privileges of membership in the Catholic Church. When, therefore, you kneel in prayer, at home or in church; when you assist at the divine services, especially at the holy sacrifice of the Mass; when you come before the altar in the joyousness of youth or in the loneliness of old age; when you come with the crown of success upon the brow or with the sting of failure in your breast; when you come in gladness and rejoicing or in tears and sadness; when you come before the toil of the day is begun or after the heat and labor have

past; when you come in the calm peace of the spirit or in trial and temptation and trouble; remember that the offering of prayer that you place before your God finds a sympathetic echo and an added force in your Church, that is making remembrance of you in her prayers without ceasing.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

BY RT. REV. MGR. CANON JOHN S. VAUGHAN.

“That you may increase in the knowledge of God.”—(From the Epistle of the day.)

SYNOPSIS.—1. *Knowledge of God. Found in written books, in the book of Nature.* 2. *Its importance. What God is. Our vocation to know Him. Love, too, depends on Knowledge.* 3. *The ways in which God reveals Himself.* 4. *God's Revelation of Himself through Nature, Scripture, Council of Vatican.* 5. *Analogy between God's works and products of human genius. The work should raise our thoughts to the Artist.* 6. *Wisdom and Power of God seen in the forming of the human body. No human power or accidental arrangement can account for it. Who formed the first man? Whence did life begin?* 7. *In general order demands a Designer, Law a Lawgiver.* 8. *Draw spiritual food from those considerations.*

The apostle, St. Paul, in the epistle just read, urges us to “increase in the knowledge of God.” The science which treats of God and His attributes is generally known by the name of Theology. Now, theology is found stored up in countless musty folios and ponderous books in the libraries of universities, seminaries, colleges and schools. True! But it is also to be found outside these human institutions in the open country; in the mountains and valleys, in the seas and rivers, in the woods and forests. In fact all nature is ever proclaiming the beauty and grandeur of God in a hundred thousand tongues, and bearing its witness to His infinite wisdom and power.

And there is no lesson so valuable, so necessary or so delightful as the lesson that Nature teaches us, when it lifts our thoughts up toward God whose mere *fiat* called it into being. For God is infinitely above all other beings; the only selfsubsisting, eternal and

necessary Being. So immeasurably above all creatures indeed, that no attribute whatsoever, no, not even the attribute of existence itself can be predicated of any creature, in the sense in which it is predicated of God. No being "is", no being "exists" *in the sense in which God is*; in the sense in which God exists. God is the sole and absolute and inexhaustible source from which all things, whether visible or invisible, whether present or future, whether actual or possible, have their rise; and all depend wholly upon Him. He is the cause of all: but is caused by none.

Hence, it is easy to see that to know God is our highest interest, and in fact, our very life. Our Lord intimated as much when addressing His heavenly Father, He said: "This is eternal life, that they may *know thee*, the only true God" (John xvii. 3). And St. Paul, one of the most enlightened and gifted of all the saints that ever walked the earth, does but express a sentiment common to them all, when he boasts that he knows nothing "but Jesus Christ"—i. e., God incarnate—"and him crucified" (I. Cor. ii. 2). On the other hand, the Holy Spirit assures us that: "All men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God" (Wisdom xiii. 1). In short, our supreme and essential delight and happiness throughout eternity (if, by God's grace, we are ever admitted into heaven), will arise, and must arise from our knowledge of God, and from the study and contemplation of His divine perfections.

The full and complete knowledge of God is, of course, reserved for the next life, when we shall see Him, as the Scripture expresses it, "Face to face," and when we "shall know, even as we are known." But even now, and in our present state, it is absolutely necessary that we should be able to form at least some faint and imperfect idea of Him. The truth of this statement may easily be inferred from the fact that all supernatural virtue and all perfection consists in the love of God. Such love is indeed the measure of all sanctity. Our very salvation depends upon this love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart," etc., is the first and most essential of all the commandments. But it is impossible to love what we do not know. No object—whatsoever—no; not even the highest and the holiest, not even the infinitely Beautiful and the uncreated Good, can awaken within us the slightest glimmer of a desire, or stir up in our hearts the least initial feeling of affection, unless that same beauty and goodness be presented in some form or another to the mind. "*Nihil volitum*,

nisi cognitum," is the old scholastic motto. "*Nothing is desired, but what is known.*" We shall not love God; we shall not desire God; nay, we shall not even fear Him, or care to serve Him, unless we contrive, in some measure, to know Him.

It is because this knowledge is so essential that God deigns in His mercy to reveal Himself. There are five great revelations of God in this world. God reveals Himself *first* through our conscience, which gives us an intimate knowledge of Him as our law-giver and the director of our conduct: the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the wicked. *Secondly*, God reveals Himself through the mystery of the Incarnation, speaking to us directly, and with His own divine lips, in the human nature which He assumed. *Thirdly*, God reveals Himself in the Holy Scriptures, wherein He addresses the world through His inspired prophets, seers, apostles, and evangelists. *Fourthly*, He reveals Himself through His Spouse, the Catholic Church, whose infallible voice, ringing over the entire world, and throughout the centuries, bears witness to Him in all ages and in all countries.

In these four ways He reveals Himself to all Christians: to all those who have the gift of divine faith. But there is another, a *fifth* way in which He makes Himself known, not to Christians only, but to all men, even the most barbarous, the most depraved, the most neglected and uneducated, and that is through the visible creation; through physical and material objects that lie around in every direction.

The earth and the whole material universe serve as our temporary abode and dwelling place, and supply our corporal needs; but they have also a far higher and nobler purpose to fulfil. They have to speak to us of God, to reflect His divine attributes, and to proclaim His wisdom, His power, His goodness, and His beauty. Hence Isaias declares that "the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord" (Ch. xi. 9). And this is undeniable. Indeed, the visible creation, stretching out around us to endless distances upon every side, is like some sublime volume written and illustrated by the finger of God, in which day by day we can read and study and inform ourselves, more and more perfectly, concerning the nature and the character of Him who dwells in light inaccessible. By the things that are made, the invisible things of God are clearly seen, says St. Paul (Rom. i. 20). And "by the greatness of the beauty and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be

known thereby," says the wise man (Bk. of Wisdom xiii. 5). That God reveals Himself through Nature is therefore clearly of faith. Indeed it has actually been defined by the Vatican Council that God may be known by reason: so that the Atheist, if such an abortion really exists, is without a valid excuse.

It is strange that so many should fail to realize the relation between the Creator and His works. It is strange that they should allow the long years of life to go by without ever rising from the contemplation of the visible and the material, to the contemplation of the invisible and the spiritual. I maintain that it is *strange*, for the simple reason that no analogous difficulty is experienced in detecting the relation existing between *human* artists and their works. If men can at once recognize the genius and ability of a human artist by gazing upon his works, why should they not by an analogous process learn something of the wisdom and power and goodness of the divine Artist by gazing upon His works?

Centuries have rolled away since Raphael plied his magic brush. Yet no one can stand and contemplate his priceless masterpieces, even at the present hour, without being made at once sensible of the consummate ability, the marvelous taste, the unapproachable skill, and artistic touch of the great Italian painter. Nor does the world confine itself to mere admiration of the pictures that he has bequeathed to it. No! It connects them most intimately with their author. While its eyes are riveted upon the canvas, its thoughts are fastened on the painter. Men muse, and marvel as they muse, at the mind that conceived so sublime a design, and at the hand that so faultlessly guided the brush, until they can scarce contain themselves, and cry aloud: What a genius! What a painter! What power of conception! What unrivaled execution! and so forth.

It is the same when we stand spellbound before some splendid piece of architecture, such as a gorgeous palace, or some superb cathedral. Here again, we, to some extent, gauge the ability and qualities of the man by means of his work. The beauty, the solidity, the symmetry, the grandeur, and the fair proportions of the building lifting its stately form before us seem to speak to us of the originator and the designer; seem to tell us much of his capacity and his mental gifts. It is, in fact—so far as it goes—a revelation of the man. If instead of painting and sculpture we take music or poetry, or science, it is all the same: for, whatever man applies

his mind to, he impresses with some touch of his own personality, and lights up with some bright ray of his own native genius, so that, in studying man's works, we may in very truth be said to be studying man himself.

Now, just as we can gain a knowledge of man through man's works, so can we gain a knowledge of God through God's works. In this way the material creation becomes a mirror reflecting its divine Fashioner, and a true revelation of the Creator Himself. God's works are countless in number and variety. Which of them shall we choose, just to illustrate our theme? One of the most interesting and beautiful is man himself. Then let us take man. What a truly marvelous creation he is! Set on one side, for the moment, the nobler part of his being, viz., his soul and all its spiritual powers, and consider his lower and purely physical nature, namely, his body. Even here we can not but feel that we are touching a divine work. A picture by Raphael, or a statue by Michael Angelo may certainly reveal some degree of power and skill. But what an immeasurably more wonderful thing we contemplate in the living, breathing, moving structure of the human form. What infinitely greater power, wisdom and skill it denotes in the supreme Artist who gave it being. What a stupendous work it is! How exquisitely fashioned! How faultlessly proportioned; how wondrously complicated, and yet how delicate and fragile, and how beautifully pieced together. Though consisting of an innumerable number of different parts, each distinct, yet all correlated, nevertheless there is no confusion, no antagonism, but the most perfect order and harmony. A typewriter or a phonograph is a very ingenious piece of mechanism, but it is but a rude and clumsy thing when compared to the human body. How came it to be? Who designed it? Who fashioned it? Perhaps we shall be told: "it was the mother." But is the mother the really efficient cause of the body of the child? Is it a fact that she has manufactured it, and given it being? In a sense, it may be true, but in a very limited and imperfect sense. The mother is merely the instrument—I might almost say the blind and unconscious instrument—in the hands of another. She is little more in the hands of God, producing the child, than the paint brush is in the hands of a Raphael or a Domenichino producing a picture. She is, in truth, but a tool; a tool wielded by an operator far greater, wiser, and more skilled than she is. So insignificant indeed is her share in the work that she

does not herself even know how the human form is woven from her substance, even though she gives it birth. No! She can not unravel the mystery for us, nor can she explain how the substance of bone and muscle are wrought from her blood: how bone is knit together with bone, joint with joint, and nerve with nerve. She has no conception as to how each limb and organ is properly shaped, built up, and exquisitely finished. She has no knowledge whatever of the science of optics, yet her child possesses the most perfect organs of sight. She has never studied acoustics, and is ignorant of its first principles. Yet see! Her child is provided with ears, as sensitive as possible to every vibration and responsive to every passing sound. And so is it likewise as regards all the other senses and organs of the body. Can all this be justly and truly described as her own work? The work of one who does not know! What! Has ignorance then grown so wise? O! How is it possible to explain the existence of even a single child without having recourse to an Artist and Organizer, immeasurably higher and wiser and more powerful than poor ignorant man. *How* is it possible? Brethren, it is not possible. The mind in contemplating even the puniest sleeping infant of a day old, is thrown back upon God as the only possible explanation.

We might press our investigation still further, and demand how the mother can, unaided and alone, construct that wonderful pneumatic pump, the heart, without any knowledge of pneumatics. How she contrives the constant and regular circulation of the blood; how she forms the organs of assimilation and nutrition, she who can neither explain nor even understand them. The more we reflect, the more clearly the truth is borne in upon us, that the mother is not the true source of human life, and that a higher and sublimer intelligence has watched over every operation, and controlled every movement, and has been the *real and only efficient cause* of the marvel, which we contemplate when we gaze with admiration on the sentient human body. The hand of God is clearly seen in this, His chief visible work. Yes. It is as evident in the formation of the human body as is the hand of man in the formation of a typewriter or a phonograph.

My brethren! Let us not be foolish, but realize and confess that no chance, no mere accident, no fortuitous concourse of atoms can possibly produce anything so beautiful, so well ordered, and so harmonious. To seek to put us off by such clumsy and childish

explanations is an insult to our common sense, and an outrage upon our reason. No! With the inspired apostle we cry out: "By the visible things the invisible are rendered apparent," and the Creator is made manifest in the creature. "If man exists, then God exists," each one of us may justly exclaim with irrefragable logic. If I myself am, then clearly God must be. His existence is absolutely needed in order to explain mine own.

This of itself should be enough. But God's claims may be urged still more emphatically. Let us, just for argument's sake, admit an absurdity. Let us, provisionally feign to favor the view that a man's body is formed from and by his mother alone, without any reference to a Supreme Being. Even were we to grant this absurdity, it would be of little avail. It would scarcely help us out of the difficulty, since it merely removes it one step further back. For the primitive or *first* man would still have to be accounted for. Whence came the very first member of our race? One may, of course, go back in imagination from one generation to another. One may allow that A came from B; that B came from C; and that C came from D, and so on. But even along these lines we can not proceed very far. Science itself blocks the way. Science teaches that there was a period (it matters nothing how distant and remote) when the earth could not have possibly harbored man: a period extending over unnumbered thousands of years, during which the earth was a ball of liquid fire; when the heat was such that the hardest metals flowed over its agitated restless surface with the freedom of water. So intense was the heat that no creature of flesh and blood—had such existed—could have trodden its surface, or even approached within a thousand miles of it without being at once reduced to a cinder. Not only therefore does science tell us of a time when man did not exist anywhere upon the earth, but it points to a condition of things which would have made his existence impossible. To a time when life, such as ours, would have been out of the question. Good. Then whence did life first arise? Two facts are laid down as certain by science itself. The first is that, once upon a time, it matters not when, MAN WAS NOT. The second fact is that now MAN IS. Then where did the *first* man spring from? How came he to be? Did he make himself? Did he start up suddenly out of the ground? Did he drop down, without warning, from the clouds? Did the wheels of chance, for ever turning and twisting, at last, and little by little, grind him out?

To argue thus, is to argue as a fool. But one answer is so much as possible to a reasonable person. God made man. Common, practical sense demands and insists upon an explanation that shall be at once reasonable and adequate, and none but this will suffice. Set aside God, and every other attempt to explain the facts lands us into an absurdity. Every other theory serves but to render more evident that we can not deny God without stultifying ourselves, doing violence to reason, and outraging common sense.

One of the first and most fundamental treatises of theology deals with the existence of God. Now that fact, as we have seen, is emblazoned upon the whole creation in clearer characters than in any book. It is the first great lesson taught us by the visible world around. As we had already observed, we can not account for our corporal existence without first postulating God's. And if the material body itself can not be accounted for, unless we admit the existence of the Supreme Fashioner and Creator, still less can we account for the soul itself, with all its spiritual gifts and faculties, unless we postulate the existence of this divine Being.

But we have no time to enter upon so lofty and so vast a theme. We will merely remark, therefore, that were we to extend our gaze yet further, and contemplate a yet vaster field, God's all presiding presence would become yet more keenly felt.

One of the first facts to strike the casual observer and to arrest attention is that order everywhere prevails. There is order on earth. There is order in the heavens. Each bird, beast, insect, flower and plant exhibits law and order. And where order is conspicuous and unmistakable we must infer an Orderer. Again, all creatures are subject to law. Without law there would be neither beauty, not symmetry, nor proportion, nor life—yet these characteristics are everywhere visible and perceptible. Whether with the botanist, we study the innermost structure and organic perfection of a plant or a flower; or whether with the astronomer we sweep the starlit heavens with our telescopes, we shall most certainly recognize the reign of law. And these laws imply a Law-giver; and Supreme Ruler. Yes; that law which holds within its iron grasp the entire universe, from the smallest floating mote, dancing in the sunbeam, to the vastest sun lost in the tremendous depths of space demands a personal and intelligent cause, which we call God.

Thus we end as we began. Nature is a gigantic book, written by the hand of God, in which we may all read and learn more and

more of Him, who is Lord and Master of all. May He give us grace to con its wonderful pages to our own spiritual profit, and may He enable us to interpret it aright, so that it may convey to us an ever increasing knowledge of His greatness, goodness, love and beauty, and fill us with an ever stronger love of Him, till the shadows pass, and we can see Him in the cloudless splendor of heaven, there to rejoice with Him for ever and ever, and ever. Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

ETERNITY.

BY THE RT. REV. RAPHAEL MOSS, O.P.

“The night is passed, and the day is at hand.”—(Epistle).

SYNOPSIS.—*Shortness of life—this forgotten usually by men—reminded of it by season of the year.*

I. Eternity—I. General notion. 2. What it means to us. 3. As the tree falls, etc.

II. To live forever—we can not cease to be. The difference of lot in eternity.

III. Need of meditation on possibility of our living in eternity of misery. The intensity of hell. Its duration. We have no excuse.

Conclusion.—The need of doing our best in a matter of such importance. To non-Catholics—make sure of being right. To Catholics—repent while there is time.

St. Paul sums up the first and most fundamental truth of the Christian faith when he tells us that we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one which is to come; and yet when we look around on our fellowmen, and seriously consider the varied picture put before us by their lives, we are forced to admit that by far the greater number live as though the next world had no existence except in theory, and as though this world were the end of all. Like the foolish rich man, whom our Blessed Lord holds up as a warning in the Gospel, they plan and scheme and dream about an uncertain future, never giving a thought to the possibility of that terrible summons, which in reality is ever hanging over their heads: “Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee.” We believe then, or rather we know most certainly, that we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one which is to come, and for the whole

human race, the birth of its new life in that distant, unknown city, will be ushered in by the great Archangel's voice, swearing by Him that liveth forever and ever that time shall be no more. But for you and for me, for each one of us in particular that day will come, when the summons shall go forth and the mourners prepare to go about the streets—when the dust shall return to the earth from which it came, and man shall go into the house of his eternity.

For each one of us death is the darkness that closes in the troubled day of life and heralds the dawn of that long day that shall know no night. The day of eternity. Let us, therefore, this morning dwell for a few moments on the thought of this eternity, suggested to us so vividly by the season of the year, now so near its end—the rapidly shortening days, and the dead leaves that strew the fields and lanes in such profusion. God speaks to us by the voice of nature—all these things have a voice if we would but hear, and their voice is the echo of the voice of God bidding us remember our last end, for even as men gazing into a glowing furnace feel its fiery heat, and bear in their faces the red reflection of its bright flames, so we also, pondering on this most solemn thought of eternity, shall find our actions molded by its influence, and our thoughts and judgments guided by its bright unfailing light.

When we endeavor to form some idea of eternity, we find that we can only succeed by comparing it with time. We are the creatures of time, because time is the measure of our brief mortal life, but eternity measures nothing and is measured by nothing, save only Infinite God Himself, for it is life without beginning and without end. Moreover, time is given to us in succession. When we touch the present moment, the past has gone from us forever, and until the present has in its turn slipped from our grasp, we can not even see the one which will succeed it. Our life is like the pebble in the running stream, always in the water, though the water is ever rushing onward. But in eternity there is neither past nor future nor change of any kind. Past, present and future are joined in one, for eternity is the perfect entire possession of life without end. When, therefore, this strange proclamation declaring that time shall be no more, shall resound through the startled world, how will it affect us? and what will it mean? What will it mean? It will mean in the physical order, that hours, and days, and years, and seasons are gone forever, and that all is fixed

in unchangeable rest; but in the moral order it means a great deal more. "Work whilst you have the day," said our Lord, "for the night cometh when no man can work." God has placed us in this world and given us time in order that we may work out our salvation by the fulfilment of His commandments, and to every single work of obedience done by us He assigns its fitting reward. Nay, He goes further. He bestows on us the grace of adoption, making us His sons and co-heirs with Jesus Christ, enabling us, if we live up to our high dignity, to claim an eternal happiness which is the fruit of this perfection of our nature. But all this must be done in time, for eternity is the night in which no man can work. As the tree falls, so shall it lie, and if death surprises us without that birthright which we have sold for the gratification of a moment, then is our loss eternal. No sorrow, however deep, no repentance, however sincere, no regret, however lasting, can avail us then. The time for that is over—the night has come when no man can work. And the pleasures for which we threw away the grace of sonship have likewise passed away forever. Here, in time, in spite of the voice of conscience urging us to seek the better gifts, in spite of the unsatisfied hunger of a soul created for something nobler than the husks of swine, we have given the first place to these empty passing joys—we have wasted on them the noblest treasures of our nature. But in eternity they will fail us; for them we have forsaken the fountain of living water, and they are broken cisterns that can hold no water—they depend on time for this supply, and time shall be no more. What, then, will our life in eternity be like? We are so used to time, so bound up with it, that it seems as though we could not do without it. Is it not as necessary to us as the air we breathe? What *is* this eternity, this awful unknown future into which we *must* one day pass, and into which we *may* pass any moment? "Know ye that it is very nigh," saith our Lord, "even at the doors." This very night we may sleep our last sleep, and where will be our awakening? We may lie down full of health, and strength, and thoughts of work, and hopes of pleasure for the morrow, and the morrow never comes. Quietly we sink to sleep, and the busy day-dreams of our waking hours change into the more shadowy dreams of night—and lo! of a sudden, like a flash of light, we have passed through the gates of death! and like the hapless sailor at night, who slips from his place and falls into the tossing waste of waters, and sees the twinkling lights of the ship disappear in the surrounding

darkness, so we drop out of this world, and for the moment no one misses us, and the world goes rushing onward, though our place knoweth us no more and we are in eternity.

What then is this eternity? It is life without end! Try to realize what that means. As you pass along the road and lanes day by day, you see so many whose faces are well known to you and familiar, and others again whom you meet for the first time and notice so little, that you may be hardly said to notice them at all. Do you ever think that every single one of them, strangers and acquaintances, shall live forever, and that you will see them all again in eternity? When you read in the Holy Scriptures of the victims of God's righteous indignation—the thousands who were swallowed up in the flood—those sinful inhabitants of the accursed cities of the plain, who perished in that pitiless rain of fire; and so many others, whose history is handed down through the long ages as a warning to mankind—do you ever pause to think that they are still alive? Pilate and Judas and the Jewish priests—Herod and his mocking courtiers, the wretch whose sinful hand drove the cruel nails through the sacred hands and feet of Jesus Christ!—all, all are living still, and will live forever. And you and I will live forever. We must, must, whether we wish or no, and could we raise the dark veil of the future and look forward through a million years, we should see ourselves still alive and so full of real life and real consciousness that nothing could possibly destroy it, save the Almighty hand of God.

This, then, and a great deal more, that we can not easily put in words, is what we mean by eternity—and this and all it implies is expressed in those last most pregnant words of the creed: life everlasting. But this is what we have to realize that that self-same life everlasting, which to the servants of God is the brightest jewel in their crown, is to the wicked the gnawing of the worm that never dies. For it is this truth, against the evidence of which it is both useless and foolish to shut our eyes, which makes the thought of eternity of such terrible importance. If a happy eternity were certain, we need never trouble ourselves about it, except, perhaps, to long for the time of its coming, but it is a revealed truth of God that there is an eternity of misery as well as an eternity of happiness, and both are equally possible. We have then to face this truth and allow it to shape our daily life, and the way to do this is seriously to contemplate that eternity of misery, and strain every

effort to escape it. We can not imagine the time which passed and the things that were done before we came into this world, for we were still in nothingness. Yet the world went on as it does now, and our place was filled and our work was done by others. So also after our death, the world will go on the same, and men will eat and drink and talk and transact business, and other people will live in our house and in our rooms; but during all this change and movement we shall not be in nothingness, we shall still be somewhere, full of life and consciousness, and perhaps plunged in unspeakable misery. It is no good to flatter ourselves by thinking that such a horrible fate can not possibly be ours. It can! It most certainly is possible, and, unless we are thinking about it and taking energetic means to avoid it, it is not only possible, but probable. As truly as our conscience tells us that we are immortal, that our souls can not die, so truly also does it tell us that the punishment which an All-Just God metes out to an infinite offense is infinite likewise, infinite in its duration, eternal. Certainly it is hard to bring it home to us, hard to realize it, but that does not make it any the less true. The task is above our imagination, but not above our reason. We know what is meant by one year, twenty years, thirty years, and we can imagine that space of time—we know what a million of years would be, but we can not imagine it. Yet what are a million of years compared to eternity. Holy writers make use of many figures to help us. They speak of the grains of sand on the seashore, the drops of water in the ocean, the countless leaves of the trees, but the sum of all these added can hardly be called the unit of eternity. Think then of what such an eternity must be, when passed in unspeakable suffering, not only unending, but in all its intensity at once. In the cruel days of the penal laws in England, when every effort was being made to stamp out the Catholic faith, we read of one glorious martyr, a woman, who was slowly crushed to death for sheltering a priest. And we are told how the weights were not laid on her all at once, but one by one, until at length her poor mangled body could endure no more, and she went to receive a martyr's crown. But all human suffering is of this type given to us gradually moment by moment—whereas in eternity the whole weight is there always—the awful pressure of suffering is ever entire, and yet death can never come.

Oh then go down in spirit to those dismal prisons of fire, and now that you have the chance make your eternal choice. Look at those

poor souls in hell—we could almost pity them, did we not realize God's justice; perhaps there are amongst them some whom we have known, some whom we have loved, some whom we have tempted and led into sin. Listen to that helpless sob, which seems to echo through those dreary vaults, like to the sad moaning of the wind on a winter's night, repeating again and again, Forever! Forever!

Will eternity then never end? They say it is a long road which has no turning—is this the one road which never, never turns? Are there no means of forcing it to an end? No hopes even of death, in eternity? Alas! no; there are none. Or rather we may say there is one way of ending it, and one only. It was tried once, and it failed. In the early days of Creation, the brightest and most beautiful of God's creatures revolted against his Maker and raised the standard of rebellion, declaring himself the equal of the Most High. And in an instant he was cast down from his mighty throne, and his dwelling place is the prison house of all lost souls. Could we succeed where Lucifer and his angels failed? Could we approach Him whose dwelling place is light unapproachable, and lay violent hands upon Him—oh my dearest brethren, it sounds horrible to say it, but could we murder God, could we put to death Him from whom all things have their life, then and only then could we put an end to eternity.

What then shall we do? On that great day of judgment when the great Archangel announces the dawn of eternity those wretched souls who see before them the fiery light of the eternal flames of hell, will call on the mountains and hills to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb of God. But we, what shall we do now? Shall we go down on our knees and implore God to send us some messenger from that unknown land of eternity—some one who will tell us what to do and what to avoid in order to secure a place amongst the elect. The rich man in the Gospel lifted up his voice from the depths of hell, and begged another such a favor for his brethren on earth, and he was answered that they had guidance enough and warning enough in the words of Moses and the prophets. We have far more, not merely Moses, not a prophet, not even an angel, but in the Incarnate Son of God Himself—Jesus our eternal Judge—and He Himself tells us what we must do. “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” “Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that

doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Surely this is enough and we need no more. Our Creator is a God of Infinite Justice. If He punishes with such terrible severity, it is never in excess, and therefore no one need fear eternity if he only does his best to serve God. But do we do our best, our very best—that is the question?

How many there are who are not Catholics, and who go through life never even asking themselves if they are doing their best to serve God. How many there are who never think of seriously trying to find out what God has really taught and commanded. Others again think of it, and put the thought aside as of no value and lull their consciences to rest by trying to believe that one religion is as good as another. Foolish, foolish souls! Are they keeping God's commandments? are they trying to do the will of their Heavenly Father? Most certainly not. We have our Lord's own words for it: "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many shall come to me on that day and say, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, etc? and I will say to them, Depart from me, I know you not."

Then again there are others who are Catholics, others who have received the precious gift of the one and only true faith, and who have to give an account of it and of the many privileges it implies. Of him to whom much has been given, much will be required—and what will the careless, negligent Catholic answer at the judgment seat of Christ, when he hears brought up against him as the reasons of his eternal damnation, that long list of special favors and special graces, that might have won for him a glorious throne in heaven? What will he say, when his Master comes to demand an account of his stewardship? Where are the talents he has buried in the earth? Thou wicked and slothful servant, out of thine own mouth do I condemn thee. They say that hell is paved with good resolutions. Surely it would be more true to say that it was paved with bad Catholics—souls that have received the grace of faith, souls that have had the blood of Jesus Christ at their daily, hourly disposal in the Sacrament of Penance, and have neglected it as though it were so much worthless filth. Once more then, go down to those poor, lost souls, and take a lesson from their fate. Oh what would they not give for one minute at the feet of the priest of Jesus Christ. On

earth they thought too much of the trouble and the fear and the shame and the penance and the prayer—but now—oh how differently they judge. Fear! what is the childish fear of a weak man's words compared to the agonizing fear that now floods their souls—; Shame! What is shame, the most burning shame, compared to the scorching of this most terrible fire of hell—; Penance! What are the fasts and mortifications of a few hours compared with this unending torture and restlessness—; Prayer! Why they would never rise from their knees again, now that they have realized what it is to spend an eternity in useless prayer, whilst their bitter, bitter tears run down without ceasing, and it is said to them daily, Where is thy God? Oh dearest, dearest brethren, you and I are face to face in this Church to-day, and one day, as sure as God is above us, as sure as He will one day judge us, so surely shall we stand face to face in eternity. But in which eternity, oh my God, on which side shall we stand? Will it be amongst the angels or amongst the devils? It depends upon ourselves. Jesus Christ knows it at this moment. He is there on the altar and He could tell us if He would, but His lips are sealed, because He would have us work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Oh, then, choose whilst you have the time. How soon we shall be in eternity we do not know—it may be very, very soon, and it is madness to put off for a moment, a choice on which so much depends. On the one hand eternal happiness, on the other eternal misery—eternal rest, eternal suffering—eternal love, eternal hate—eternal life, eternal death.

“I call heaven and earth to witness that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose therefore life, that thou mayst dwell in the land, love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayst obey His voice and that thou mayst cleave unto Him, for He is thy life and the length of thy days, and that thou mayst dwell in the land which He swore to thy fathers that He would give them” (Deut. xxx. 19).

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, THE CHRISTIAN'S MODEL.

"For this is he of whom it is written: Behold I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee."—St. Matt. xi. 10.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—I. The charity of St. John in his active life.
1. His preaching penance. 2. His sufferings in prison. 3. His message to Christ. 4. His martyrdom.
II. The virtues of St. John in his private life. 1. His mortification. 2. His humility. 3. His continual prayer. 4. His interior life. Copy St. John both in his public and private life.

Had we been present, brethren, when our Lord delivered this discourse, most likely we would have sought out the Baptist, and have studied both his words and his actions, in order to learn what made him so pleasing to God, and then have taken him as our model and exemplar. It is evident that Christ wished men to do this, for He says to the Jews: "Amen I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is the lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. xi. 11). From this we see that our Lord wished the people to follow John's advice and walk in his footsteps; so that, becoming just and holy, they might render themselves worthy of heaven, and thus become in the next life even greater than St. John was in this. Let us glance then at the Gospels and see what they tell us about the great charity of John in his active or public life, and also the many wonderful virtues he exhibited in his hidden or private life. For we have an active and public life since we must mingle with the world, and a private one which we pass in the quiet of our homes. Therefore it will be most profitable to gain an insight into the character of the saint, since he is such a beautiful and practical model, for our earnest and continual imitation.

I. 1. At the time appointed by God, St. John appeared in the hill country or wilderness of Judea, near the banks of the Jordan, and began to preach incessantly to the people. They flocked in crowds to hear him; some through curiosity, but many with a desire to profit by his teaching. "And there went out to him all the

country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mark i. 5). Public attention was soon fixed upon him, and the hand of the Lord was with him. He warned men of their false views and unholy lives, his discourses and manner were striking and impressive, and it is no wonder that men entered into themselves, reflected upon their lives, and coming to him confessed their sins, and were baptized. What was the burden of his discourses, what did he continually preach about? His great theme was that of penance, "Do penance," he cried out, "for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2). This penance meant not only sorrow for sin, but included voluntary penances or punishments inflicted for past sins. It was to be a Godly sorrow working steadfast unto salvation (II. Cor. vii. 10), a sorrow that would keep men from the further commission of sin. The Baptist's words were a most solemn call, not only from a sinful life, but especially to the beginning of a new and holy one. Outward show, sentimental feelings, half conversions were not sufficient; a thorough change of heart was required. When the Pharisees approached the Baptist, with their exterior show of holiness, and their interior full of pride and hypocrisy, he rebuked them sternly. "Ye brood of vipers, who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of penance" (Matt. iii. 7, 8). No mere pretence would satisfy the saint. The repentance he preached meant a thorough, entire, and radical change of life; and the fruits of this change were to be practical, concrete, tangible actions, which would prove beyond all doubt that the heart was completely changed.

We have no distinct vocation to preach penance in the manner John did, yet still we have an apostolate in this matter. We are bound to give good example, and we are bound also in our public intercourse with the world to exhibit to all men a holy, edifying, penitential life. Christ Himself says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me (Matt. xvi. 24), and whosoever did not carry his cross and come after me, can not be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 27). Surely nothing more is required to show that the man who does not lead a penitential life can not be a disciple of Christ. Hence our Mother the Church says: "The whole life of a Christian ought to be a perpetual penance" (Con. Trent, Sess. xiv., on Extr. Unction, Introduction). Yet our Lord tells us: "So let your light shine before men, that they

may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven " (Matt. v. 16). What stricter command could be given to us than this, what could prove to us more clearly that in public we are bound to show by our good example that we are true disciples of Christ, and we must by our good works endeavor to convert others? What a fearful thing it is to hear such language as this: "I would become a Catholic, only So-and-so leads such a bad life." Yet it is sometimes heard. Let us examine our souls, and see if we by our scandalous lives may not be hindering some from entering the Church. We must remember, that especially in our day, when luxury and pride are so prevalent, we have a great work to do for God. For the Catholic who is careful about his soul's salvation, who hates sin and fears God's judgments, and has a zeal for God's glory, will make an impression on the worldlings of our time. The man who in public leads a holy and edifying life, must sooner or later influence others; and gradually his good actions and high principles will commend themselves to his fellow-men, who will respect and imitate him. Because we by our sins contract new debts of punishment to God's justice, which demands that we should inflict voluntary penances upon ourselves in private life; yet let us not forget that in our public life we are bound, without pride or ostentation, to give good example to all, and to lead before all men a holy, mortified, and penitential life; so that seeing our good works they may glorify our "Father who is in heaven." St. John through his great love for God and man did this, so must we act.

2. Full of zeal for God's glory, the Baptist hesitates not to rebuke Herod for his many crimes, but especially for his incestuous life with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. The proud, imperious king is highly enraged and has John seized, cast into a loathsome prison and loaded with chains. Think what the saint suffered from cold, hunger, thirst, and the other effects of his confinement. Herodias conceived a bitter, murderous hatred for the Baptist, and would have him put to death, but Herod feared a tumult amongst the people, for they esteemed "John as a prophet" (Matt. xiv. 5). Had John been of a worldly spirit, he would have been silent, and not have noticed the fearful crimes of these two sinners; but being full of the spirit of God, he would not yield one iota, nor in any way countenance their grave sins.

Yet how very often do we see the most serious sins committed before our very eyes, and we smile at the sinners, we are silent,

we wink at their crimes, we countenance their actions, and if we do not actually cooperate with them, we lend color and respectability to such sinners. Surely we know this is wrong, and we may thus become partakers of their guilt. "Let them do as they please," some say, "let the priest speak to them." This is entirely wrong, since we can never in any way countenance sin. The parent is bound to correct his children when they sin, the master his servants. We are bound to admonish our equals should they sin before us, and we can never countenance even the sins of our superiors. St. John did not, neither can we. If we love God how can we tolerate men offending Him by sin? If we have any love for our neighbor, can we see him risking the salvation of his soul without trying to save him? Natural charity bids us admonish him, since it obliges us as far as possible to remove all evils from our neighbor. The Holy Scriptures say: "Reprove thy neighbor, that he may not sin again" (Ecclus. xix. 14). And our Lord also says: "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother" (Matt. xviii. 15). But we must act with the greatest prudence in admonishing our neighbor. First, we must be sure he has sinned; secondly, we must have a real hope that he will listen to us and amend; thirdly, we must be sure our rebuke will not cause him grave inconvenience or trouble. Rash, noisy, or public admonitions are most dangerous. A serious look, a hint, a few gentle words uttered through a spirit of love often will do all required. Yet remember, St. John through zeal for God's honor and love for his neighbors' salvation, suffered imprisonment rather than countenance Herod's crimes, so must we act regarding the crimes of others.

3. But the Baptist, even in prison, is so full of love for God and man that he sends two of his disciples to Christ to ask this question: "Art thou he that art to come or look we for another?" (Matt. xi. 3). John knew well that our Lord was the Messiah, but he also knew that his question would raise a public inquiry, and would give Christ a further opportunity of manifesting Himself to the people, and that the two disciples, and perhaps others, would be converted. When the messengers delivered their question, our Lord answered: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi. 4, 5). Now the Jews at this time expected the Messiah, and the

prophets had foretold many wonderful things about Him. *Isaias* had said: "Take courage and fear not: behold God himself will come and will save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free" (*Isaias* xxxv. 4-6). Christ then told the disciples and the people present that He was the Messiah, since He was working before multitudes the very miracles which the prophet foretold the Messiah would perform. The disciples of John were converted, and no doubt in time would convert others. John then even in chains, manages to cooperate with Christ for the salvation of men. Why, then, can not we cooperate with the Church for the same object, by joining the Church's many Confraternities and Holy Societies, which work in so many ways to make men fit for heaven? And can we not each in his own sphere help others to save their souls by giving good example, saying a few kind words, performing acts of charity, or doing anything which will make men think of God and their duties to Him? Of course these things must not be done through mere pride, vanity, or ostentation, but through a pure love of God and man.

4. St. John in prison is true to his resolution of not in any way countenancing Herod's crimes. Had John yielded, no doubt he would have been made a great favorite. As it was Herodias was bent on his death, and she was wondering how to accomplish it. On Herod's birthday he gave a supper to his chiefs and nobles, and when Salome, the daughter of Herodias, had danced well and pleased all, Herod swore an oath to give her whatever she asked, even were it half of his kingdom. Here was the opportunity Herodias sought; she prompted her daughter to ask the head of St. John on a dish. And Herod, though exceedingly sorry, sent and had John beheaded in prison, and the girl brought the saint's head to her mother (*Mark* vi. 21-27).

Many there are who take rash oaths to do that which is evil, and who rather than meet the jeers and taunts of their evil companions carry out what they swore to do. Herod feared John and knew him to be "a just man" (*Mark* vi. 20), but still for fear of being laughed at, he becomes guilty of murder. There are others also who will give up many sins, but will not give up their predominant one, just as Herod did some things John had advised, but would not give up his sensual life with Herodias (*Mark* vi.). All see the power which evil companions and temptation have over men. The good

Catholic's motto should be: "I will die rather than commit one grave sin." Yet when temptation approaches us through evil companions, we have not the moral courage to face, not prison, nor death: nay, we have not courage to face that which is far less painful, namely, the laughter and evil taunts of men. And so we yield, we do what they want. Ah God, where can this lead us but to eternal perdition. How different was the conduct of St. John; he was firm, he feared not death, truly he was not "a reed shaken with the wind."

II. 1. Such was the public life of St. John, and now we will find that great as he was in his active life, he was just as great in his hidden life. "Do penance," he cried out to others, and who led a more mortified life than he did? Until his time to preach he dwelt in the wilderness, that is, in retirement, and kept himself entirely unspotted from the ways and maxims of the world, from the evil example and temptations of the slaves of sin. He was not indeed "clothed in soft garments," but "with camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins" (Matt. iii. 4). Neither was his food grand or luxurious, since it consisted of "locusts and wild honey" (Matt. iii. 4). He came "neither eating or drinking" (Matt. xi. 18), that is, he came leading a most self-denying and mortified life. Contrast this with our conduct. We are most particular about our food, we like to have luxuries, we do our utmost to dress grandly and finely, and we waste upon superfluities what ought to be given to the poor. Let us learn a lesson from the Baptist. We can not be clothed as he was, yet we can suppress any approach to gluttony, and at the same time spend less money on clothing, and thus destroy one of the things which leads to pride.

2. Though Christ praised John so much, what were the Baptist's thoughts about himself? When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to John, they asked: "Who art thou?" (John i. 20). The Baptist instantly said: "I am not the Christ." "Art thou Elias?" they next inquired, and he answered, "I am not." "Art thou the prophet?" And John answered, "No." When they demand to know exactly who John is, he replies: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord." They then require to hear why, since he was not the prophet, did he baptize, and this gives John the opportunity to praise our Lord. "I baptize with water; but there hath stood One in the midst of you whom you know not. The same is he that shall come after

me, who is preferred before me: the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose." Then the messengers departed. The next day John saw our Lord, and pointing Him out to those who stood about, he plainly told them that this was the Christ, the Messiah (Cf. John i. 19-34). Surely these words and actions of St. John prove his great humility. He distinctly says that he is no great personage, that he is but a mere feeble voice, a sound that passes quickly; that instead of being the Christ, he is not fit to be the servant of Christ.

We, on the contrary, full of pride, are highly offended if men do not praise us; and beyond this when they attribute to us qualities which we have not, we become deceivers and liars, and pretend that we indeed have even greater perfections. The darling sin of the world is pride, a vice entirely opposed to humility, a vice that is the parent and source of many great evils. Most of us are touched, if not deeply saturated, with it, and we must guard against it. Let us not think of our greatness, but rather of our lowliness and nothingness; for he that exalteth himself shall be humbled, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Lucifer who exalted himself was humbled and hurled into hell. Be careful, then, and do not imagine that you are far more cleverer than other people, for most likely you are not. Do not esteem yourself on account of your self-styled holiness, but count up and examine your sins. Do not trouble to watch others, to talk about them, because, as a rule, they are as good if not better than you. People who do these kind of things are not humble, but proud. For pride makes us think ourselves very clever, very wise and great. It also makes us watch others, compare ourselves with them, and praise ourselves, whilst we condemn them. Avoid all this in every way.

3. Another most beautiful feature in the Baptist's private life was his incessant prayer. In his retirement, before he began to preach, his prayers were continual; for, speaking little to men, he had much time to commune with God. And when he labored for his neighbors' good, preaching and baptizing, was not this done for God also, were not his thoughts fixed upon God? His heart was continually aspiring to God, his intellect ever thinking of God. Many an hour that he might have taken for rest he gave to prayer.

If we say a few prayers morning and evening, and utter a pious ejaculation during the day, we think this a good deal. But a most important point about our prayers is, how do we say them? Alas, we must often confess, that the few we do say, are said without

attention, without respect for God's presence, without humility or devotion. Ah, here is a most serious matter for us to dwell upon. For God's sake, take this thought home with you, and ponder over it very often. "How often do I pray? With what care, attention, respect, humility, and docility do I pray? Do I not pray where I am sure to be distracted? Do I not mumble out the words rapidly without thought or care? Is not my mind fixed upon anything but the presence of God, who is ever near me when I pray? Ah, I can never be too careful, nor can I be truly spiritual until I am a child of true and fervent prayer." In the name of heaven, keep these thoughts before you, study them as frequently as you can.

4. What was the result of St. John's continual prayer? One that is most important. Continual prayer lays the foundation of a true interior life. The end of all perfection is union with God, and there can be no union unless we converse and commune frequently with Him by prayer. This prayer may be continual, though much time has to be given to worldly affairs. Since our souls are clothed with material bodies here on earth, we need sounds or speech to communicate with each other; but God being a true Spirit, He can see even the most secret motions of our hearts. He wants those hearts, He is always asking for them. How beautiful then is it that when our lips are silent our hearts should ever be directed toward Him, ever speaking to, ever thinking of God. When we thus continually converse with God, He communes with our hearts by His many sweet thoughts and gentle promptings, by his many actual and habitual graces. Thus in time, He becomes our director, our guide, our adviser. He then rules over our interior life, and causes that interior life to rule over our exterior or active life before men. God then becomes the ruler of all our thoughts, words, and actions. Hence we are in constant union with Him, and every word of ours, every thought and action of ours, are done for God, and in conformity with His holy will. What is this but perfection. It was this which made the saints so great, and was the source of their perfection. This was the source which enabled St. John to do so much for God's glory and man's salvation. Daily, nay hourly then, must we strive after this true interior life, so that we may have the hand of God over us, and His continual help and grace to assist, guide, and direct us in our every thought, word, and deed. This we may gain by true continual prayer.

Brethren, Holy Church has appointed the season of Advent as a time to prepare for the coming of our Lord at Christmas. In her wisdom she has chosen as the best means of preparation, theme of penance. She sets before us the words and actions of the great Baptist, because it was his proper and peculiar task to prepare men for the coming of Christ. This great saint we have studied as our model, and although his spirit is most appropriate for Advent, yet we see also that it is most appropriate for the whole life of the true Christian. For remember that there will be a second coming of Christ for each of us, at the moment of Judgment, when we will have to give an account of our stewardship. St. John has taught us how to prepare for this second coming also. He has shown us that in public we must preach by good example, abstain from any connection with sin, and lay down our lives rather than commit one serious crime. He has taught us to cultivate in our private life the virtues of mortification and humility, to become men and women of prayer, and to strive with all our powers to have that interior life which benefits the soul so much, which helps it on so quickly to holiness. Copy St. John, then, brethren, imitate him both in your public and private life, and when you pass from this life, at the moment of Judgment, Christ will praise you, praise and bless you and call you to heaven, where you will meet your great model, and together with Him rejoice in the presence of God for ever.

SERMON FOR THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

BY DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B., B.A. (OXON).

“The work is great, for a house is prepared not for man but for God.”—
I. Paralip. xxix. 1.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—David preparing the materials of the temple thus explains their richness and profusion. All this time another temple was in preparation—Mary Immaculate. A. She was living in God's mind from all eternity. B. Shown in vision to the angels at their creation, the occasion of the fall of a third part of them. C. She is revealed to our first parents after the fall. Henceforth she shines as a star of hope in the universal darkness. D. The preparation for her coming through long ages, the prophets hand down the tradition; all the history of the chosen people is a preparation for her coming. E. She is foreshadowed in type and proclaimed in prophecy. F. And so at last she comes, the flawless work of God's creating hand: a temple immaculate and radiant. G. She is the second Eve, her likeness and unlikeness to her prototype. H. Still the dragon makes war on her and her seed. But there is hope, for God is our brother and Mary is our advocate.

Introduction.—It had been the earnest desire of King David to build a temple to Almighty God, and it was no doubt one of the most bitter disappointments of his life that he was not allowed this privilege. God passed him over in favor of his son Solomon, because he had been “a man of war and had shed much blood,” and it was fitting that the house of the God of peace should be raised by a man of peace. But far from resenting the rebuff, or letting it serve as an excuse for doing nothing, David, on the contrary, with characteristic energy set about collecting precious materials of all sorts in readiness for the great work. “Gold for vessels of gold, and silver for vessels of silver,” brass, iron and rare woods, onyx and alabaster of divers colors, “all manner of precious stones and marble of Paros in great abundance”—“three thousand talents of gold of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver”—such were the treasures he collected with infinite zeal for the sacred work. And at the sight of his pious fervor the people were stirred to a holy emulation, and tribe vied with tribe in pouring out into the treasury gold and silver and precious things of every kind, so that the house of the Lord might be worthy of His Majesty.

For this was the thought that inspired their generous offerings.

A house was to be built, a permanent habitation, not for man, not for the king, not for the priests, but for the Lord God of Israel Himself. And what could be costly enough for Him, for the house "in which the ark of the Lord and the footstool of our God might rest"? How indeed should man prepare a palace for the King of heaven; could all the magnificence of earth form a temple worthy of Him who sitteth above the Cherubim?

But since it was His divine will that a temple should be prepared for Him, it must be as worthy as was possible. All man's feeble resources of riches, beauty, art must be lavished on the building, for "the work was great, the house was prepared not for man, but for God."

And so David made his offerings, and the people gladly gave their part, and Solomon continued the work of preparation for many a long year more; for to that most magnificent of kings, the lavish offerings of his father seemed all inadequate to the greatness of their destination. And you know the beautiful story how after all the preparations were at last complete, and the cedars of Lebanon had been felled, and the most skilful artists and workmen summoned from Tyre, and the stones had been cut and prepared, and all was ready, the temple of God rose silently, noiselessly like some exquisite creation of the coral insects in the Pacific Ocean; rose at last gleaming in its golden beauty, a vision of splendor such as the world had never yet beheld, and the people of the Lord rejoiced with exceeding joy. And all through the preparations and the building the soul of the king had been possessed by the thought which had dominated his father. As he wrote to the King of Tyre: "The house which I desire to build, is great: for our God is great above all gods! Who then can be able to build him a worthy house, if heaven, and the heaven of heavens can not contain him; who am I that I should be able to build him a house?" (II. Par. ii, 5, 6).

How beautiful and how true was this thought! The work was indeed a great one, one such as the world had never yet known, and well might David and Solomon be penetrated with the sense of the inadequacy of all they had done or could ever do to make the house of God worthy of His Majesty. But, my brethren, all this time, as through unnumbered ages before, a house was being prepared for our God infinitely more beautiful and infinitely more worthy than the golden temple of Solomon. And this work was great indeed, and involved a preparation infinitely more careful,

more prolonged and more sacred, for the house was to be the living habitation of God incarnate. Nor need I tell you the name of that temple, *Mary Immaculate*.

A. She it was who, living in God's mind for all eternity, was to rise at last at the destined moment the living temple of the living God. She had been present with Him in all the perfection of her beauty, in all the varied glory of her graces, "the first born before all creatures," the destined tabernacle of His Majesty.

"I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made, the depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived" (Prov. viii. 23, 24). If from the first the Almighty had foreseen the creation of man, He had foreseen also the Incarnation of God. And Mary was the chosen instrument to whom were to be entrusted the unspeakable riches of heaven, on whom was to rest the overshadowing Spirit, who was to contain in her pure breast Him who is incomprehensible, and carry in her feeble arms Him who sustains the universe. No wonder then if she were conceived from all eternity! No wonder if the Divine Spirit reposed with ineffable joy in the thought of her who was to be His spouse, if the Almighty Father strained the resources of infinity to fashion a worthy habitation for His Word. "For Him all things were made," and she most of all! For she was to be His temple, and so the work was great. Therefore to him who knows how to read the divine oracles, all history is but a preparation for Mary, and throughout successive ages we may trace the development of the divine plan which culminated in her.

B. So at the creation of the angels there appears the vision of the Apocalypse. "A great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Apoc. xii. 1). The vision of Mary with her divine Son is offered to those glorious spirits, offered for their worship and homage. It seems that a third part of that angelic host fell from their high estate rather than acknowledge as their queen one who was no pure spirit like themselves. There was war in heaven, and though Michael and his angels prevailed, those who fell preserved the tradition of undying hatred to her who had been the cause of their overthrow.

This first of all rebellions, this first of all heresies was thus crushed by her immaculate feet, and henceforth there begins the ceaseless war between the dragon, the old serpent on the one side, and on the other the Woman and her Seed.

C. And thus in the garden of Eden the serpent tempts our first mother, and she listens to his specious pleading which is to work the destruction of her race. Sin is followed by death as an inexorable consequence, and the doom of the new-born race seems sealed. But again the same sign is vouchsafed. Again we catch a glimpse of the radiant figure of the woman sun-girt and star-crowned who is to be the second Eve. The battle is to be long and fierce, but in the end there will be victory to the Seed of the Woman. "She shall crush thy head."

Thus to mankind the woman is a sign of hope and life, but to the fallen angels a sign of hopeless overthrow. Henceforth through the darkness of the fallen world there gleams a star, a star that presages the dawn that is coming when God's long work shall be complete. And meanwhile the rage of the demon is let loose against the Woman and her Seed.

D. The eyes of the prophets and kings of Israel are ceaselessly turned toward this star. The prophets pass on the divine word of hope, like watchers each on a lofty mountain height, waiting for the dawn. They cry out to each other, "Watchman, what of the night?" and they cheer each other's hearts with the hope of coming day, for even in the blackest darkness there yet shines the star. Even Balaam, the wayward prophet of an alien people, catches the glimmer of its light.

But the work is great, for a habitation has to be prepared for the Most High! And therefore long ages pass, and yet there is no sign, but the silent preparations of God are going on all the time, noiselessly, secretly. He is preparing the soil, gathering together the materials, choosing one, rejecting another, laying the foundations of the mighty edifice.

With God there is no hurry, no confusion, no change. He chooses the race of Abraham, the tribe of Judah, the family of David, each in its turn, and then slowly and patiently He works upon each in His own way. All the preparation of the chosen race, by law, instruction, expiations, sacrifices, punishments, all was directed to this one end, all was for Mary, for Mary was for Himself. The faith of Abraham, the miracle of Isaac's conception, the election of Jacob and all his mysterious graces, the meekness of Moses, the devotion of David, the charity of Ruth, all that was holy and pure and sacred in prophet, patriarch or king, all were directed to this one end, all had their part in the consummating and perfecting of

this unique glory of their race, each and all were elements in the preparation of this living Temple of God. The long purgatory of the exile, the swift punishments which followed on sin, the high if not impossible standard of sanctity which was perpetually held up before the people, were but factors in the slow purification which the nation was called upon to undergo before it could produce the immaculate lily of Israel. And all the time expectation grew higher and more intense, Isaiah sang of the Virgin who should conceive, of the flower that should spring forth from the rod of Jacob, Jeremias of the Woman who should compass a man, Zachary of the fountain which should be unsealed for the washing of the sinner and the unclean. And when the last of the prophets had sung his swan-song, the tradition was kept alive by the hero martyrs of Maccabæan times, until in the fulness of time Simeon the aged stood in the Temple waiting and watching for the Mother and her Son.

E. And all the time, too, Israel had been taught by sign and symbol of the glory and the grace of her who was to bring redemption, and reverse the condemnation incurred by Eve. What was prefigured by that mysterious ladder placed between earth and heaven, whereon the angels of God ascended and descended, but she who was to unite once more heaven and earth, and to bring the Creator down to His own creation? The Church teaches us in the sublimest strains of her liturgy that in the burning bush which Moses saw unconsumed we are to recognize the perpetual Virginity of the Mother of God. The fleece of Gideon filled with the heavenly dew when all the earth around was parched and dry, the Ark of the Covenant made of incorruptible wood, covered within and without with purest gold, containing the Manna, even the bread of life, which came down from heaven, overshadowed by the dread Shekinah, the mysterious Presence of God—the All-Holy, the table of the bread of proposition; all these were figures of her, even as were the Holy of Holies, and in a permanent degree the Temple of God itself.

Again the cloud, small as a man's hand, which rose from the sea as the great prophet watched on Carmel, and which so quickly overspread the whole sky, and poured out upon the parched and arid earth the life-giving rain from heaven, has ever been considered a striking symbol of the Virgin Mother of God.

F. Thus prepared for, thus prefigured through the long years

at last in the fulness of time she appears. When men have almost lost hope of her coming, one day they look up, and lo, she is in their midst. Silently, noiselessly she has arisen, even as the temple of old; and like that temple, most resplendent is her beauty. Clothed with all the richest graces of heaven, she is immaculate, spotless, because she is the destined tabernacle of the Most High.

What an idea it gives us of God, of His divine purity, His awful sanctity, when we meditate on the graces of Mary! If she is thus resplendent, so that the very riches of her grace bewilder us with their variety and their profusion, it is because she is all for God. She was His new Creation, destined entirely for Himself, and He looked on her and "saw that it was good." The work is great and the preparation has been long, but was she not worth waiting for? Is not the perfection, the completeness of her beauty, the most wondrous revelation of the power, and the wisdom, and the love of our God?

G. Yes, she is immaculate, and we love to proclaim her so to-day. She must be immaculate, for she is to be the second Eve. She, too, is to be "the mother of all living," bringing to the world not death, but life. Like Eve, whose fatal work she is destined to reverse, she must be born sinless and established in grace. The graces indeed of all created beings are concentrated in her, and surpassed in her. If Jeremias and John are sanctified in the womb, it is fitting that Mary should be sanctified in the first instant of her being. And so the angel when he kneels before her in the holy house of Nazareth rightly and fitly hails her as "full of grace." See, my brethren, how heaven hangs, as it were, upon her word! Her consent is necessary for our salvation, even as the consent of our first mother had to be won before we could be lost. Just as the fallen spirit of old waited for the first Eve to consent to his suggestions, so now Gabriel, "the strength of God," kneels in expectation for the fiat of the Virgin of Nazareth. Eve's fiat was one of death, Mary's brings us life and love.

Her privileges, however, greatly surpassed those of her prototype. Unlike Eve, Mary, though a mother, was also a Virgin. And as the first-born son of Eve brought death into the world, and incurred the curse of God, so the first-born son of Mary brings us life and salvation, and upon His head is pronounced the divine benediction, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

H. And still the dragon makes war on the Woman and her Seed.

Still the long, fierce struggle goes on, as it will go on until the trump of judgment shall ring through earth and heaven.

But we have hope; we are not left without succor in the conflict. For the first-born Son of Mary has been caught up to the Throne of God, and there we see amidst the ineffable glories of the Godhead the gracious form of a brother-man, there we discern the beatings of a tender, human Heart. And not only is He there throned in majesty at the right hand of God, but she is there as well. The golden shrine of God, the ark of the covenant, the temple of the Most High has been translated into the highest heaven amid the jubilation of the celestial hierarchies; and on the steps of God's Throne we see a woman kneeling rapt in prayer.

Pity us, O spotless Mother, and from the height of thy glory cast a glance of tender compassion upon us thy children here below!

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

BY THE VERY REV. F. C. DOYLE, O.S.B.

"Be nothing solicitous, but . . . let your petitions be made known to God."—Phil. iv. 6.

SYNOPSIS.—*The Epistle for this Sunday suggests for our consideration "the Providence of God." Meditation on this subject will strengthen the faith of those who doubt, and will, perhaps, convince those who do not believe in God's providence. Three essential notions of God necessitate His providence in our regard.*

I. 1. His infinite knowledge, which makes Him cognizant of all our necessities. 2. His infinite love, which makes Him feel for us in our needs. 3. His infinite goodness, which moves Him to make provision for those needs.

II. These necessities are of a twofold nature: of feeding our bodies and our souls, or in other words, they are our material and our spiritual needs. God provides for our material necessities by furnishing us with all that we need in the way of food, clothing, and shelter, and for our spiritual necessities, by the Sacred Scriptures, by the Church, by instruction, and by the Sacraments.

Conclusion.—*Therefore, put unbounded trust in the providence of God. His knowledge makes Him cognizant of your needs. His love makes Him eager to relieve them. His love moves Him to relieve them.*

In these words the apostle exhorts us not to worry overmuch about things, but to learn to tell God about them and leave them to His providence. Concerning that providence, men are some-

times inclined to doubt—particularly when things go not well with them—and to say that God has abandoned them, that He has no care for them.

It is, therefore, very advantageous for us, now and then, to bring the fact of God's providence before the eyes of our mind, and as the Epistle of this Sunday seems to invite us to the consideration of this consoling truth, we shall this morning make it the subject of our meditation.

I. (1) Many even among those who are reputed to be good Catholics, now and then have doubts about the providence of God, many others have in it no faith whatever. How shall we be able to establish the truth of its existence and thus enlighten the unbeliever and scatter the doubts of the wavering? We shall easily enough accomplish both these objects if we recall to our minds a few essential notions which naturally present themselves to us when we use the name "God." If there is a God, He must of necessity have infinite knowledge—He must know all things. Knowing all things, He must be intimately acquainted with His creatures, not as a great mass, but, as we have said, intimately with each individual unit. Therefore, He knows each of us. He sees into the inmost recesses of our minds. He knows our thoughts and our desires; He knows our acts; He sees and He is cognizant of everything that happens to us. Consequently, He will know all our needs; all the sorrows that envelop our hearts as in a thick pall; all the misfortunes that shut out from us the sunshine of life; the losses that we sustain; the pains and the anxieties that either rack our minds or torture our sensitive bodily frames. This knowledge belongs to God, because He is God, infinite in wisdom. The Scripture does not leave us to make this inference by our natural reason, but in countless passages represents to us God as cognizant of all that concerns the meanest of His creatures. In the Book of Exodus, Chap. II., it represents Him as actually seeing the affliction of the people in their Egyptian bondage; as hearing their cry; and as descending among them to deliver them. In the Gospel, our Lord over and over again confirms this truth by repeatedly saying that our heavenly Father is fully aware of all our necessities, our need of meat, of drink, and of clothing. It is, therefore, one of the essential attributes of God that He should know all things that concern His creatures. This knowledge necessitates the providence of God.

(2) Another essential attribute is that, besides knowing all our necessities, He should be deeply moved by them, should feel for us who are pained by them. For God is not only infinitely wise but infinitely loving. His very nature is love—"God is charity." Consequently, He must with the affection of a parent love the rational creatures whom His infinite power has brought into existence. Loving them, it will follow that their troubles, their sorrows, their misfortunes, their needs will make Him feel a sympathy for them. He has, in fact, for His creatures the heart of a mother. That heart is more sensitively alive to their sorrows than it is possible for a mother's heart to be; for a mother may forget her offspring, but God can never forget us. As a proof, consider His action as represented to us in the Gospel account about the people who followed Him for three days into the wilderness, hanging spellbound on His words. When they were weak and weary, He felt for them; He had compassion upon them. Without any solicitation on the part of others, His compassion or feeling for them urged Him to supply their wants by means of a miraculous interposition of His divine power. Hence, this other essential attribute of God, that is to say, His love, necessitates His providence over us.

(3) Besides God's infinite knowledge and His infinite love, there is one other attribute which necessitates His providence. That attribute is His infinite goodness. This is one of the first that we learn about God. In our minds He is always "the good God." Now, goodness is unselfish. One of its essential qualities is that of pouring itself out on others, of imparting to them that which it possesses, of sharing it with them. A shadow of this is seen in even men who are good. They have, as it were, but a spark of goodness, yet that spark causes them to wish to share what they have with all with whom they come in contact. Now in God, goodness is in its plenitude. Therefore, there is in Him an irresistible impulse, if we may dare to say so, to pour out that goodness on us all. Consequently, because God is infinitely wise and knows all our necessities, infinitely loving, and therefore feels compassion for them; infinitely good, and therefore most willing to satisfy our needs, it will follow that there is what we term the providence of God, that manifestation of His love by which He supplies all our needs.

II. These needs are twofold, those affecting our bodies, and those affecting our souls. Our bodily needs are meat and drink, shelter

and clothing, health, strength, and a sufficiency of this world's goods to enable us easily to live our earthly life. Our spiritual needs are instruction in the word of God; help to resist our passions; the remedies of the sins into which we fall, and the rest. Now, for both sides of our being, for our material and for our spiritual wants, the providence of God most amply makes provision.

Just call to mind how He provides for your material wants. This earth beneath your feet is a storehouse whence you draw your daily bread. The air that you breathe is peopled by living creatures destined to be your food. The waters that flow through and encompass this globe are teeming with that which will sustain and nourish you. The forests are filled with animals which you may trap and tame; which you may make subject to your will, make toil for you, and supply you not only with food, but with clothing. The crops that spring from it, or the materials that are dug out of its bosom minister to your wants, the one satisfying your hunger, the other giving you that with which you build up the homes that shelter you from the heats of summer and from the frosts of winter. You are never in want of bread. If you fear lest even this necessary should fail you, God bids you look at His irrational creatures and from them learn to trust in His fatherly providence, and not to be solicitous, saying: "What shall we eat or wherewith shall we be clothed?" Your heavenly Father knowing that you have need of these things, and feeling compassion for your necessities, out of His infinite goodness most liberally supplies them all.

But this material side of your being is not the only one, nor is it the most important. There is another side, the spiritual, the unmaterial one, for "not in bread only doth man live." There is a spiritual sustenance which is as necessary for your unmaterial well-being as bread is for the support of your mortal life. You need the word of God, the word of instruction which speaks to you of God, of the future life, of your eternal destiny, of what you must believe and of what you must do to win the never fading crown.

This also God in His providence ministers to you. He has given you the Sacred Scriptures in which is the word of life. He has given you His Church, the depository of His treasures, to guide you in the true interpretation of those words of life. That Church admits you to a share in all the blessings stored up in its bosom. It raises you when you have fallen; it feeds you with the heavenly bread

of instruction and with the adorable Sacraments of Christ's Body and Blood. It aids you in every stage of your existence, from helpless infancy to helpless old age, nay, to the dread moment when death is about to quench your spark of life and to open for you the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. It does all this just as Christ did it for the people who crowded round Him to hear His word; who sought first the kingdom of God and His justice, and as a reward received from Him all that was necessary for their material and for their spiritual wants.

Conclusion.—Therefore, put unbounded trust in the fatherly providence of God. He knows your material wants; He feels compassion for them; He satisfies them. In all your troubles, sorrows, difficulties, trials, look to Him with firm faith and childlike confidence. He knows your spiritual necessities, your weakness, the hostility of the devil, the world, the flesh. As He supplies your bodily, material wants, so will He with far more eagerness supply your spiritual, unmaterial needs. Did He not die to redeem you? Did He not institute the Church to carry on His work? Have you not His glorious Sacraments to help you? Why then be dejected, or disheartened about either material or spiritual necessities? You have a good Father watching over you. Cast all your care upon Him. He will deliver you; for He knows your wants; He feels compassion for them; He will relieve them.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT. ON PREPARATION OF CHRISTMAS.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR DEVINE, PASSIONIST.

“A voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”—St. Luke iii. 4.

SYNOPSIS.—*The prophetic gift of John the Baptist is signified by the expression: “The word of the Lord was made unto John, the Son of Zachary.” The meaning of this gift and the authority of the prophet’s teaching:*

I. The manner of the preparation for Christ as taught by the text.
1. *The fulfilment of the prophecy in Christ according to the general interpretation.* 2. *The preaching of John regarding the Baptism of penance for the remission of sins.* 3. *The nature and effect of the virtue of penance or repentance.* 4. *The virtue of penance includes in its Christian application the Sacrament of Penance either in desire or in reality. The Christmas duty.*

II. The virtues of St. John in his private life. 1. *His mortification.* words of Isaias: “Be comforted, be comforted my people.” 1. *The blessings announced to Jerusalem applied to Christian people. The interpretation and application of the words: “She (Jerusalem) hath received of the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.”* 2. *The blessing to be derived from the dwelling of God in the souls of the just.* 3. *From the contemplation of Christ the God-man.* 4. *The blessing and duty of true adoration of our Infant Saviour in spirit and in truth. Conclusion.*

These words quoted by St. Luke are taken from Isaias, the prophet (Ch. xl.), and they refer to St. John the Baptist. Before they are introduced in this place St. Luke in verse ii. tells us that “the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary,” to signify the divine commission given to John to assume the office of teacher and of prophet among God’s people. The revelation regarded himself and he was thereby constituted in a special manner the herald of God and the interpreter of His will. The prophetic gift is extraordinary and not one that can be possessed permanently and exercised at will. “The prophetic light,” says St. Thomas, “is not in the intellect as a permanent habit or form, but as a transient motion or impression.” And St. Jerome says: “If the word of God were always in the prophets and had a permanent dwelling in their breast Ezechial would not say so often, ‘And the word of the Lord came to me.’” We find the prophets themselves sometimes praying for the divine light of prophecy, and at times they are even commanded to pray with this intention. We know from our

Saviour's testimony that St. John was a real prophet, and even more than a prophet, and it is quite certain from the above text that on the present occasion he spoke as a prophet, and that he must have received this gift, like all other prophets, from God Himself. His preaching, therefore, has peculiar force and meaning, and may not be limited to the time and circumstances mentioned in the Gospel, when in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius he came forth from the wilderness to fulfil his mission. His preaching is directed not only to the Jews who heard him, and whom he so earnestly exhorted to prepare for the coming of the Redeemer, but to all nations and to all people and to the end of time. It is meant for us as it was for the Jewish people in the days of John the Baptist. We know who he was, the manner of life he led in preparation for his great office and the heavenly light which inspired his teaching, and we shall therefore listen to what he has told us concerning the proper manner of preparing for our Lord's nativity and the coming of Christ into our souls at this time.

1. *The manner of preparation.*

His preaching is given in the words of the Gospel, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be straight, and the rough ways plain."

According to some, this prophecy, in its literal sense, refers to the Jewish deliverance from the captivity of Babylon, but that event is commonly represented as a type of the deliverance effected by our Redeemer through the work of salvation. The *way of the Lord* means the way of holiness and of Christian virtue according to these other words of Isaiah: "And a path and a way shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way: the unclean shall not pass over it, and this shall be unto you a straight way so that fools shall not err therein. . . . And the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and shall come into Sion with praise; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isa. xxxv. 8-10).

The metaphor is derived from the pioneers who go before the march of a king or a great conqueror such as we find described by Josephus in reference to Vespasian, where he tells us that in his vanguard were men whose duty it was to make the road even and straight, and if it were anywhere rough and hard to be passed over to plane it and cut down the woods that hindered the march that

the army might not be tired (F. J. iii. 6, S. 2). The general meaning of the metaphor, which is also a prophecy, is, in the words of a modern writer, "That no obstacles, whether they arose from depression or power, or pride, or cunning perversity, or menacing difficulties, should be able to resist the labors of the pioneers and heralds of the kingdom of God. The feeble instrumentality of the Galileans should be strengthened; the power of the Romans and Herod should be shattered, the duplicity and plots of the Pharisees and worldlings should be defeated; the apparent insuperable opposition of Judaism and Heathenism should be swept away;" and the Gospel of Christ was to triumph over the minds and hearts of men. The history of the Christian Church shows us how that prophecy has been verified.

After considering the words of St. John the Baptist as a prophecy, I shall now invite you, dear brethren, to consider them as a sermon. St. John was not only a prophet, in the strict sense of the word, but he was the first and the greatest of evangelical preachers. The Gospel narrates all the wonderful things concerning him, in order that we may understand the infallible authority of such a preacher. He began this office by "preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins." It is true he baptized, but all the efficacy of John's baptism in remitting sins was derived from the virtue of penance or by virtue of the sorrow through which alone remission of sins was then obtained. It is remarkable that Christ also began His preaching by announcing the duty and necessity of penance! "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," thus confirming the teaching of John. When, therefore, St. John says, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," we are to understand that we have to dispose our souls for the coming of Christ by penance or repentance. This then is to be our preparation in order to receive or increase the grace of Christ and to obtain the fruits of His Redemption. As the voice was heard in the wilderness saying prepare the way of the Lord, so that voice goes forth at this time from every Catholic pulpit repeating the same words of admonition to prepare our hearts for God by penance and amendment of life. Let us not make the mistake of understanding the penance here mentioned as corporal austerities, such as those practised by John the Baptist in his food and clothing and general manner of life; these have their value indeed before God, but the penance preached by the Baptist means more than what these things

imply; it means the virtue of penance, that virtue whose act is contrition or sincere sorrow for our sins.

Penance or repentance signifies by its effects all that preparation of soul which is required and which is necessary. It is by it that all obstacles are removed out of the way of the Lord. 1. All the guilt of sin is remitted through repentance. 2. All the eternal punishment due to sin is remitted with the guilt. It is thus that every mountain and hill are brought low, and the rough ways made plain and the crooked ways made straight. 3. Another effect of penance is the recovery of virtues and the revival of merits. The supernatural virtues lost by sin are restored by repentance, and the meritorious works deadened by sin revive by repentance. It is through repentance that the soul recovers its principal dignity by which it is numbered among the adopted children of God through the supernatural life of grace, and under this consideration we can understand how every valley is to be filled. We have to bear in mind that the penance we here speak of is Christian penance, that which includes the desire to receive the sacrament of penance, and its actual reception when we have the opportunity. The old custom of the *Christmas duty* is brought before our minds by the thought of true repentance at this time. Through this Sacrament we can comply with the conditions appointed by our Divine Saviour for true repentance and for obtaining its effects. Furthermore, there is the addition of sacramental grace together with the peace and serenity of conscience to be considered as the fruits of devoutly fulfilling our *Christmas duty* by the reception of this sacrament. This, brethren, is the whole teaching of the Baptist understood in its Christian application to the preparation of our souls for the celebration of the great feast of our Lord's Nativity.

2. *The blessings of a good preparation.*

To return to the text of Isaiah (xl. 1). The prophecy quoted by St. Luke belongs to the second part of Isaiah's book, which may be called the "Book of Consolation," from the opening words which gives us the keynote of the whole second part: "Be comforted, be comforted, my people, saith the Lord. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her: for her evil is come to an end, her iniquity is forgiven: she hath received of the hand of the Lord double for all their sins." This whole passage and the verses immediately following have reference to the work of redemption. Redemption is first described negatively, then positively, and in

verse to the presence of God among His people is announced: "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh together shall see that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken." And again (verse 10): "Behold the Lord God shall come with strength, and his arm shall rule: behold his reward is with him and his work is before him."

The Rev. A. J. Maas, commenting on the text, "Be comforted," says that "it contains the burden of the Divine commission intrusted to the prophet." The commission is not given once and then left to the good will of the prophet, but God gives it continuously, hence, *saith the Lord*. Those good tidings are to be spoken to the heart of Jerusalem, i. e., according to the Scriptural manner of expression, to the sorrowing Jerusalem. Finally three reasons are assigned why the sorrowing city should be consoled: 1. Her evil or rather her warfare is come to an end. 2. Her iniquity is forgiven, or better, her ransom has been paid. 3. She hath received double of the hand of the Lord for all her sins. This sentence has been taken in a double sense: first, Jerusalem has suffered enough to satisfy the Divine justice, so that God's compassion now regards what His justice was forced to inflict. The turning point from anger to love has come, and the latter will break forth the more intensely the longer it has been pent up. Some see in the double punishment the double destruction of Jerusalem. Second, the interpreters, however, apply the *double* not to the punishment of Jerusalem, but they understand it of the double grace which the city is to receive" (Christ in Type and in Prophecy, Vol. I., p. 361).

We may apply these words of consolation to all penitent souls who worthily prepare themselves for the reception of their God. Their evil and their sins which brought about that evil have come to an end: their iniquity has been forgiven through the merits of Christ's Passion and death—the ransom has been paid. As to the double punishment in the past or the double grace to be received of the hand of God I would ask you to reflect on the calamities that have befallen cities and nations as well as individuals during the past year and to recognize in them the finger of God. Would that Christian people might acknowledge even in temporal punishments the visitations of God and the acts of His providence, and derive from such sad and unfortunate events the lessons which they are ordained to teach and to inculcate. God will always bring His own work to a successful issue: He will re-

ward the deserving and chastise the wicked. It is our duty not only to recognize in past events evidences of the just anger of God, but to take to heart the warnings of the prophetic voice so as not to deserve such punishments in the future. Certain sins invariably bring down upon a nation and her people temporal calamities and punishments as well as spiritual. The sin of sacrilege is especially odious to God. It brought down double punishment on Jerusalem, and in every age of the Church, since the beginning of Christianity, God has manifested His displeasure for this species of sin by punishing even in this life and that by visible signs those who were guilty of sacrilegious acts and practices, whether in the form of sacrilegious oaths, sacrilegious functions, on any other profanations of sacraments and sacred things or sacred truths. However, let us turn from these reflections with the resolution of detesting, abhorring, and denouncing evils and iniquities of this kind, whether in high or low places, and turn our thoughts to the blessings which God bestows upon those who worthily prepare their souls and turn their hearts with sincerity to His love and service.

When the mind and heart are purified from the stains of sin, the soul becomes the dwelling place of the Blessed Trinity. Then it can understand the real meaning of the words, "Behold your God." Then it can contemplate God with admiration and love. The object of this contemplation is also the God-man, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, and contemplating Him through the light of faith the soul sees in the Babe of Bethlehem the omnipotent, infinite, eternal, and incomprehensible God, just, merciful, and loving. It contemplates Him also in His sacred humanity, and can understand the full meaning of His words: "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John xiv. 6). He is the *way*, as St. Thomas says according to His humanity, the *truth* and the *life* according to His divinity. "I am the door," He says in another place. "By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved: and he shall go in and go out, and shall find pastures" (John x. 9).

Conclusion.—It is through repentance alone that those who have sinned can be reconciled to God and restored to His grace. True and sincere repentance must include the Sacrament of Penance either in desire or in reality. It is the true manner of preparation for the coming of Christ. That His coming into our souls may be to our comfort, our consolation and peace, we should renew our

faith, and in the light of that faith behold our God, and contemplate Him as present in our souls; and in the mystery of the Incarnation as revealed in our Divine Saviour Jesus Christ, true God and true man. Contemplating Him we should devoutly adore Him in spirit and in truth, and be ever ready to listen to His words of warning or of counsel, whether announced by the voice of His prophet preaching in the desert, or spoken by Himself when on earth as the Good Shepherd of our souls, when He tells us that He is the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*, and the *door* through whom alone we can enter into salvation.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD.

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM.

BY THE RT. REV. RAPHAEL MOSS, O.P.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—*Christ's coming for all. For those who went before and those who have lived since. Why He came. The fall of man. Knowledge of God through nature. Through the Old Testament. Man in semi-darkness. Ashamed and afraid. The desire of the just for His coming. How He came. As a little child. Wished, 1 to transform the ideals of men—love of riches—abuse of power; 2 to arouse faith and love in the world. Conclusion.*—*Exhortation to love and loyalty.*

Ever since the first Christmas night, when the songs of the angels called mankind to the feet of the new-born Saviour, the joy and gladness with His coming brought to our sorrowful sin-laden world, has been poured upon us with the same unfailing bounty at each returning Christmas. For this most beautiful festival, the Birthday of our Lord—the brightest and most gladsome of all festivals—is not a mere reminder of an event of history over and gone long ago: it is indeed meant to remind us that our Saviour's human life began on this day so many hundred years ago, but that human life once begun knows no end; it is still and always must be a real living force in the history of our race. "Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever." More than eighteen centuries ago, as men count time, He came into the world, our Beautiful Saviour, and He came for all, to save all—to win all hearts. Not merely for those who heard with wondering awe the music of that first Gloria ringing through the skies, and saw with fear and trembling the

brightness of white angel forms upon the mountain side—not merely for those did He come, but for all. He came for those who had lived and prayed and suffered and died centuries before that day. And Abraham looking forward saw it and was glad; and so also for us lost in the darkness of time and yet unborn, our Saviour came, and we look back upon His coming, and because of it we rejoice with exceeding great joy.

For the Feast of Christmas means so much to us. It is the manifestation of God's unfailing kindness, the revelation of His eternal love, the consummation of that union toward which creation was but the first step. It is the answer to all our prayers, the fulfilment of all our longings, and it is because of Christmas that all creation which was waiting patiently and groaning and travailing in pain, can now send up a grateful cry—God hath visited His people—God hath visited His people! And what a visitation. Look at the history of our race before our Saviour's coming! God is the creator of that human nature which makes us what we are, and hence it is bound to Him by a special bond of real relationship that no power can weaken or destroy. It might seem, therefore, and with justice, that the creature's highest glory and its profoundest joy would lie in the manifestation of that glorious relationship, and in everything that could bring it in touch with its Maker. So indeed it ought to be, and so it would have been, had God's work stood untouched in all its first perfection, but sin appeared, to separate and put asunder what had been so wondrously joined by the great Creator. And then it came to pass that God became unknown, and because all that is unknown is terrible, man shrank in fear and trembling from all that spoke of God. True there were forces everywhere—the sun gave its light and warmth, and the moon reflected its brightness, and the trembling stars lit up the dark sky night by night, and by their varied shining spoke of varied distances that seemed to lead up to the throne of God. And all these were witnesses, “the heavens show forth the glory of God and the firmament declareth the work of His hands,” and the earth too spoke loudly with its mountains and its valleys, its seas and rolling rivers, for these were witnesses also. But though the witnesses were there, their message was unheeded or perverted. Men knew these things and were familiar with them, with a knowledge and a familiarity that brought no understanding, and if from time to time the voices spoke more loudly, so that understanding woke and men saw God, then they

fled in terror and dismay. Everywhere there lay upon the earth the pall of darkest ignorance, everywhere save within the narrow limits of one chosen people. "In Judea God was known, and His name was great in Israel, and His abode in Sion." Yes! they knew Him as their Creator, they worshipped Him as their God, and believed that His watchful Providence arranged the joys and sorrows of their lives, and they feared Him, for in their Sacred Books they read how God from time to time drew back the veil that hid His glorious face and spoke to man, and they read with fear and trembling. For what did they read? They read of a dark and sorrowful day, when the gates of the Paradise of Pleasure were for ever closed to a fallen race, and the fiery sword was seen turning every way. And the voice of God was heard cursing the earth because of sin and pronouncing judgment of death upon all mankind. They read of a time when the skies filled with wild and heavy clouds and God opened the floodgates of heaven and the cataracts of the deep, and destroyed the whole human race save one small family. They read again of a storm of fire that blotted out from the face of the earth five great and prosperous cities—and all these were visitations made from God and visitations made in anger. And again they read how God had come down on Mount Sinai not in anger, but in kindness and friendship to make a covenant with them. Yet such was the glory of His majesty that all the Mount was terrible, and the people fell prostrate on their faces and prayed God to hide Himself again. And now the veil had once more been drawn aside, and God had once more visited His people—but ah! how differently! and so the message of the angel was: "Fear not! Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, for this day is born to you a Saviour who is Christ the Lord."

God then had shown Himself once more, and this time He had come as the Messiah, the long-expected Saviour who was to undo the work of sin. And how long and how anxiously He had been expected, how eagerly desired. How many hearts had pined away with the weary waiting of those silent years, listening for the roll of His chariot wheels that were so long tarrying. And how desperate was the need! For it seemed, at least, as though God's work had been destroyed by sin, and every year of waiting made the ruin more complete. When the first sin appeared in the world, man fled in horror from his own sad handiwork, and in answer to God's stern but loving words, full of reproach, yet at

the same time full of pity—Adam, where art thou? he came forth trembling and afraid with one poor, vain excuse: “I was ashamed, and so I hid myself.” Yet what a world of meaning in that cry: “I was ashamed, and so I hid myself,” and how perfectly it serves to express all the misery of the fallen world, before the coming of the Saviour. In all those hundreds of years man was ashamed and hid himself from God, for all those hundreds of years the sorrowful work of sin went on, perverting the mind of man and corrupting his will and ever plunging him into deeper and more hopeless darkness. God’s people were silent, because they had no knowledge, and the Prince of Darkness ruled the world with a power that seemed supreme, and did with men even as he would. Oh what a sorrowful night—a long and dreary winter’s night, while patriarchs and prophets and holy kings wept and waited, and strained their eyes across the mountain tops of vision, if so be they might catch some faint and far-off glimmering of the coming light. And ever and ever their prayers were going up to God, “O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down. O mighty God, leader of Thy chosen people, thou who didst show Thyself in the burning bush and amidst the thunders of Sinai, come and save us in the might of Thy power. O root of Jesse, who art a sign unto all peoples, come and deliver us—tarry no longer! O key of David, who openest and shuttest and no man may gainsay Thee, come and break the chains of our prison house. O Star of the Morning! Brightness of light eternal, come and shine upon us in the darkness and shadow of death. O Emmanuel, our King and our Lawgiver, O Desired of all nations, O Saviour of all peoples, O Lord our God, come and save us.” And at length He came. Fair and beautiful as the morning light stealing across the sky—and all as silently—the long expected Saviour came. The night of waiting was over; patriarchs and kings rested in their graves, the prophets’ lips were stilled in death, and He who had guided the patriarchs and ruled by the kings and spoken to the prophets He Himself was in the world: “My people shall know my name in that day—for I myself that spoke, behold I am here.”

And how had He come to us? We have seen how He came in Paradise, and in the waters of the deluge, and in the fires of Sodom, hidden and invisible indeed, but felt in the awful majesty of His avenging power. We have seen how He came on Sinai to declare His law to men, when the dark clouds and flashing light-

nings veiled, even while they made manifest, His dreadful presence on the mountain top. And the prophets also looking forward to His coming as the Saviour, and foreseeing the work He was to do, strove to put in words the mysteries they foresaw. He was to be a King, ruling from sea to sea—sitting on the throne of David, His Father—breaking rebellious nations in pieces like a potter's vessel. He was to be a judge crowned with the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit—wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, and counsel, and fortitude, and piety and fear of the Lord, and He was to judge the poor with justice and slay the wicked with the breath of His mouth. He was to be a priest taking possession of His Temple and purifying the sons of Levi like a refining fire. How, then, did He come at Bethlehem, this holy priest, this all-wise judge, this all-mighty king, this glorious and eternal God? In the darkness of a winter's night, its deep and tranquil stillness broken only by the distant music of rejoicing angels, calling upon men to rejoice with them and to adore their Saviour—and those who heard them, hurrying to His feet in trembling wonder knelt there in tears of love, for God had come to men in the likeness of a little child. A little child! All the glory and pomp and majesty were laid aside, and in their place He had chosen the sweetest and most lovable of all that is sweet and lovable on earth—a little child.

And why did He come like this? Ah, my brethren, it surely needs no proof to make us understand the reason. St. Thomas says that the great mystery of the Incarnation was the manifestation of God's infinite goodness, in other words His infinite love, and love always and everywhere demands a return of love. The little babe of Bethlehem came then to prove to us the riches of God's love for us, and to win somewhat of our love in return. He came to change the world, to transform its ideals, to influence its restless activity, and He would do all this, not by a display of His greatness, not by the overpowering glory of His majesty, but by *love*. For think once more of what the world was before He came, try to realize something of its intellectual and moral darkness; think how everywhere and at all times might was right and goodness but a name; so that as the prophet says so despairingly: "There was no truth, there was no mercy, there was no knowledge of God in the land, but cursing, and lying, and killing, and theft, and adultery had overflowed, and therefore did the land mourn, and the people were silent because they had no knowledge." And it was to a

world like this, sunk in what looked like hopeless wickedness, that God came in pitying love and kindness—it was on a world like this, eaten up with sensuality and every form of selfishness, that He sought to fix a yoke of piety and self-sacrifice and brotherly love. And it was as the little child of Bethlehem that He would succeed, and the prophet foresaw His success and declared it beforehand. “A little child shall lead them,” he says, “and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the covering waters of the sea.” This was His triumph, this was His victory, this was His glory, the “glory of the Lord” which was to be revealed to the world—the glory to which the beloved disciple bears witness, the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The world bowed down before riches and outward show of wealth. It must be taught the glory of poverty. It must be taught that earthly riches are not a good in themselves, and that they who possess them must be made to understand that they are but the stewards of the One Great Master. And, on the other hand, the poor must be taught self-respect; they must realize that they are not the offscouring of a proud, contemptuous world, but the chosen favorites of heaven, and that the poorest, most miserable rags may be the livery of angels. A hard lesson for rich and poor, and no one could teach it but the Babe of Bethlehem, whose only bed was a wisp of straw on the floor of a forsaken stable—“A little child shall lead them.”

Again the world bowed down before the strong and the mighty, acknowledging no power but that which could enforce its claims, despising all effort that was not crowned with the halo of success. And so in the old pagan world, we read with shame of the cruel degradation and oppression of helpless women and children, and of the horrible fate of those whose lot was that of slavery—a life lower even than the beasts of the field. And all that had to be changed; a mighty revolution indeed, yet through the Babe of Bethlehem it slowly came to pass, and there arose a Christian world in which woman had her rightful place as man’s divinely-given helpmate, and children were cherished for the sake of Him, who was once a little child Himself, and from the weary limbs of toiling slaves, the fetters that dishonored them were swiftly stricken off. The world was taught the glory of weakness, the glory of helplessness, and it was taught something more. It was taught that

weakness triumphs most, and helplessness works best when it seems most trampled under foot—in other words the world was shown a nobler and higher standard whereby to judge of failure and success. “A little child shall lead them,” and that little child began to lead the world when every door in Bethlehem was closed against Him, and His mother’s tears fell fast upon His face because He who had made the world, and whom she had brought forth into the world was rejected of men—houseless and homeless in its streets. And if it was so with Him, so also was it with His followers. St. Stephen, full of grace and strength, overcame his foes; but nowhere was his grace and strength so perfect, nowhere was his triumph so assured as when he lay outside the city walls, a crushed and mangled heap—the life beaten out of him by the stones of a savage crowd.

And it was by teaching the world all this, by transforming the world like this, that the child of Bethlehem set Himself to win the love of the world. For, my dearest brethren, in all this we have a lesson of faith and hope, and where faith and hope abound, love is never wanting. We live by faith when we have learned to look beyond the veil of outward things, and serve and reverence Him, the Father and Maker of all, in the lowliest of those who are our brothers, and hope springs up anew in our tired hearts when we remember that our strength is not our own, but His; and what to us seems hopeless failure, may be in very truth the victory He desires. And so seeing Him and living for Him we shall begin to feel His love poured out upon our souls, until they glow with a return of love for Him. And it will be a real love, a true love, a love that will turn back upon our faith and hope and make them brighter and more earnest, even whilst it feeds upon itself, and so gets stronger, and urges us to do great things for Him, who did so much for us. Ah! how little it is we do for Him, even when we do our best, since a little thought would show us how our best was really done for self, and not for Him. And how many there are who think they love Him well, and would do much for Him, and yet refuse Him something which He asks because it seems so small. Only a little thing! a mere nothing! And we who call ourselves His friends, and fancy we are grateful for the love that drew Him down to Bethlehem and made Him face the bitter cold, the dark night, the broken straw, we can say: “This vexes Him, and keeps me from Him, but it is only a little thing.” Oh what poor

love, what worthless friendship. "I might be kneeling at His crib, pressing my lips to His dear feet, feeling His little hand laid in blessing on my head, and I am content to forfeit all that, and stand afar off with the common herd." Ah, not so! my Beloved, not so surely. He has but to speak the word, and we obey with loving hearts, for we belong to Him wholly and entirely. The little child of Bethlehem shall lead us and lead us where He will. In the days of old, the Roman general who had fought and conquered was decreed a *Triumph*. And all Rome made holiday, and the people shouted their acclamations in his honor as his chariot passed along the streets on his way to the Capitol, and before him went the Roman Standard, and the crowds of weeping captives, the victims of his conquest. Dearest brethren, Jesus Christ is our great leader—the conqueror of the world—and Christmas Day is His Day of Triumph. But His triumphal chariot is the manger, and the standard borne before Him is the Cross, visible even at Bethlehem, and we, dear brethren, you and I and all Christians, are the willing captives who grace His chariot wheels, and as we pass along through life the angels in heaven sing over us, and their song is ever the same, the song of Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

SUNDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS.

MARY AND EVE.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM.

"And thy own soul a sword shall pierce."—Gospel of day.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—(a) Words both of Epistle and Gospel point to our Lady's share in Christ's work of atonement. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman" (Epistle of day). Simeon said to Mary: "This child set for the fall and resurrection of many in Israel, and thy own soul a sword shall pierce" (Gospel). (b) Her place in Redemption that of Eve in the fall. (c) Eve first brought into touch with death weeping over her son, the brother-slain Abel, figure of our Lady weeping over the dead Christ. Group of the Pieta in our churches. But Christmas inconsistent with Good Friday. Adam and Eve partners in joys of Eden and subsequent family. So Jesus and Mary associated in grief of Calvary, triumph of Resurrection, and birth of Church. Let us touch on a few points of contrast and resemblance between Eve of the old dispensation and Mary the Eve of the new.

I. Man a fallen and a redeemed race. History of fall told not only in the Bible but in our depraved hearts. Not what God made us, "little less than the angels," but a wreck by sin. Religion clears up: (a) Riddle of human life by dogma of original sin in Adam and Eve, and restoration through Christ and His Blessed Mother. (b) Therefore children in double sense with double parentage. (c) What we owe to both. (d) As fall due primarily to Adam, "in whom all have sinned," and secondarily to Eve, so Redemption primarily to Christ, secondarily to Blessed Virgin.

II. (a) Types and figures and prophecies of old law foreshadow coming of our second spiritual parents in new. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman . . . she shall crush thy head" (Gen. iii. 15). (b) Adam intended to be head, type, and ideal of manhood of our race; Eve of its womanhood. Both failed. Christ the new Adam, Mary the new Eve.

Conclusion.—(a) Eve's place in Eden held by Mary in Church to-day. (b) Duties of love, respect, and filial resemblance transferred to our Blessed Lady.

These words of Holy Simeon bring vividly to mind the share our Lady had in the great work of atonement by which our Lord redeemed the world. Her share in redemption was that of Eve in the fall. She was the new Eve—the mother of redeemed humanity given to our race as a legacy from the cross. One of the most touching scenes in the early days of human life on earth was Eve, the sinful and the fallen one, brought into contact with death for the first time, weeping over her favorite son Abel, slain not by wild beasts, but by his own brother Cain just as in our churches to-day we see a sculptured group or picture of Our Lady mourn-

ing over the dead body of her son—the “Holy one of Israel”—cruelly mangled by his own brethren. With truth did the saintly Simeon speak of the mystic sword of grief that should pierce her maternal heart.

It is not fitting, however, with the glad symbols of Christmas joy still in profusion around us to speak of our Lady's sorrows, especially as a feast is purposely devoted to the subject later on in the year. She was associated with her Divine Son in joy and triumph, as well as in grief and woe, just as Eve shared with Adam the delights and pleasures of the garden of Eden as well as the toils and sorrows of the sin-accursed and bramble-covered earth to which they were banished. Let me briefly, therefore, instead, pursue the points of resemblance and contrast between Mary and Eve.

We are at the same time a fallen race and a redeemed one. We feel intimately that we are fallen. Were we utterly unacquainted with the sad history of the fall, we should find it plainly written in our own hearts; since we can not otherwise account for the natural wickedness of the human heart, its grovelling tendencies and deeply rooted antipathy to what we know to be right and alone worthy of pursuit save on the supposition that mankind is merely a wreck of its former self. And this is exactly what religion shows in clearing up the riddle of man's present condition here below. It tells how evil has crept into God's world, how it comes about that unceasing war is waged between the higher and lower powers of man's nature, how it is that he is no longer what God made him and meant him to remain the crowning ornament of creation; but has become through sin the foul offspring of his own heart, the being he is to-day—a mere ruin of former greatness. And in consoling words it points to a remedy in telling us to look back to other parents who have gained for us an inheritance immeasurably grander than that of which our first parents were deprived. For, dear brethren, we are children in a double sense. We are born of the earth, and have for our parents in this birth Adam and Eve, and we are born again of “water and the Holy Spirit,” and have for parents in this second birth Christ and His Blessed Mother—Jesus and Mary. To Adam and Eve we are indebted for the seeds of sin and all the baser passions of our nature—to our second parents in the new life we owe the lofty hopes and higher aspirations that are

within us. Through the sad inheritance of original guilt transmitted to us from Adam and Eve, we came into this world children of wrath, bondsmen of Satan, heirs to earth's miseries and condemned to death both temporal and eternal; but through Jesus and Mary we have entered by the gates of baptism amidst the chosen sons of God, and are become together with Christ coheirs to eternal life. Through our first parents Adam and Eve we have indeed lost much; but through Jesus and Mary we have gained immeasurably more. "Where sin abounded, grace did more abound," says St. Paul. Think it not strange to hear the name of the Blessed Virgin coupled so closely with that of our Blessed Lord in the great work of redemption—a work regarded as peculiarly Christ's own—since, in reality, it is not at all more strange than to hear the names of Adam and Eve linked together in the history of man's fall. And just as in saying with the apostle that "through one man sin entered into the world," we do not mean to exclude Eve from having had a very important share in that sad event; in like manner, though we attribute Redemption primarily to Christ alone, still we regard the Blessed Virgin as inseparably united with Him in the accomplishment of this glorious event. For Christ is the second Adam and Mary the second Eve; and as the part of Adam in man's fall was that of Christ in his redemption, so too was the share of Eve in the fall that of the Blessed Virgin in Redemption. And, therefore, we can say with as much truth that Mary saved us as that Eve betrayed us. And just as if Eve had never listened to the tempter's voice, mankind would never have fallen; in like manner had Mary refused to hearken to the angels it would never have been redeemed, else why would God have sent an angel to ask her consent? We can therefore attribute the redemption of mankind to the obedience of the Blessed Virgin with as much truth as we can attribute its fall to the disobedience of Eve. Hence we find that from the moment of the fall of our first parents and the corruption of our nature in them, all the types and figures and prophecies of the old point to and cluster around the future man and woman—in whom human nature should be repaired and in whom should be fully realized that grandeur and perfection of humanity in which Adam and Eve were created but in which they failed to persevere. Before they were cast forth as homeless wanderers from Eden, we find the Almighty addressing the serpent: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed

and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. iii. 15). Now Christ, the seed of this promised woman, the new Adam was the head and type of men, the one sole perfect man, the very embodiment of the idea of a perfect man as it exists in the mind of God. And just as Christ, the repairer and counterpart of Adam, was the type of the manhood of the human race, so was Mary the second Eve, the type and head and crown and perfection of its womanhood. If not, then we are compelled to think that there is not one amongst women what Christ is amongst men—matchless, faultless, all perfect—nay we shall have to believe that the mother of Cain was at one period of her life greater and more excellent than the mother of the Redeemer; and that God's ideal of a perfect female remains barren and unrealized. But this, dear brethren, consistently with God's usual mode of acting, we can not admit. Mary was the second Eve—the one true, spotless, and perfect woman. "Thou art all fair my beloved, and there is not a spot in thee" (Cant. iv. 7). Like the first Eve, she came forth from the Creator's hands sinless and unsullied and became the mother of mankind born in the second and spiritual birth; but here the parallel ends, for unlike Eve she never lost the priceless inheritance of grace entrusted to her keeping. Eve believed the seductive words of the fallen angel, vainly promising to make men like God, and thereby opened the floodgates of sin and misery upon the world: Mary believed the words of the true angel declaring that God would become man, and brought into the world life, redemption and all the bright hopes of immortality. "Eve hearkened to the lying promises of the serpent and became his slave. Mary hearkened to those of the angel and crushed the serpent's head." Thus, dear brethren, by her fidelity and obedience to the Most High, has she deserved to be chosen copartner with her Divine Son in the great work of Redemption—parent of a new and reinstated race of those who are called to the lot of the children of God. She possesses in her person all the qualities entitling her to be conjointly with Christ, head of the human race. As Christ was King, Prophet, Virgin, and Father, so was our Lady Queen, Prophetess, Virgin and Mother. She was queen. The blood of the Royal house of David ran in her veins, and she is saluted by the Church as queen of angels and of men; she was prophetess, her predictions stand to the present day; she was Virgin, ages before her birth the prophet

in rapturous vision addressed her as such, the sign to be given "*Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium*"; she was spouse united in chaste wedlock to St. Joseph on earth and espoused to the Holy Ghost in heaven; and finally she was Mother from having given birth to the Most High God in human nature; and summed up in her person the highest excellences of these classes of women.

Worthily therefore, dear brethren, does the Church taught of God greet her as Queen and patroness—a position to which her rank amongst God's creatures amply entitles her. She is in the Church to-day what Eve, if faithful, would have been in the garden of Eden. And now I ask, supposing that we were still in that blissful abode, should we not instinctively look up to and reverence Eve as the great common mother and patron of us all, the one through and from whose unswerving fidelity to God we inherited the glories and joys of the earthly Paradise; and shall we, like ungrateful children, regard with less affection that great second Mother through whom have come to us favors and blessings incomparably greater than those which Eve's fidelity could have earned for us—through whom we have received Christ the Saviour and all the joys and privileges of Redemption.

But besides showing us the claims she possesses on our life-long gratitude and respect, there is another practical lesson that we should learn from what has been said to-day, and it is this, the duty we are under of bearing them a filial resemblance. As I said they are the parents that each one of us has received on being admitted into the Church, when the waters of baptism cleansed from our souls the foul stain of sin inherited from our first and earthly parents; and in so far only, are we their deserving children inasmuch as we bear them a filial resemblance by conformity of our lives and manners with theirs. In them has God embodied all that is great and noble in human nature, so that they may be the models to whom all classes of the children of men may look up and vie with each other in imitating, till in proportion to our weakness we grow up "into the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ." If rich and influential, they as lords of the universe tell us not to fix our hearts on the fleeting goods of earth, and to use the wealth and power we possess for the benefit of our neighbor and the advancement of God's kingdom and glory on earth; if poor or destitute or fallen from a high position in life, they with the blood of Jewish royalty in their veins, having to find refuge in a

cave on a dreary winter's night, flying to a distant country from and unjust and cruel tyrant, meeting with fresh trials at every step of life, tell us how to sustain patiently the trials and labors of daily life, remembering that "We have not here a lasting abode, but seek one that is above."

Therefore, dear brethren, in the weary journey of life, let it be ever our consolation and our glory to have their image and example before our eyes. Thus will be traced gradually in our souls that filial resemblance which will gain for us the right of entering one day upon the reward that God has promised to His faithful children.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD.

"A HAPPY NEW YEAR."

BY THE REV. DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B.

SYNOPSIS.—The common greeting has a true and deep meaning—Happiness, in what it consists—How little we realize it—The Beatitudes tell us—and God's Saints confirm it—St. Francis and Brother Leo—The example of our cloistered nuns. The year must be really a new one, if it is to be happy. "Ring out the false, ring in the true." Let us begin again.—St. Ignatius. *Sursum Corda.*—Be methodical in the work. The year may be our last—we may see but a few weeks of it—Let us use the time we have, for it is short.

Since we met last Sunday within these sacred walls, the old year is gone beyond recall, and we have entered upon a new one. All around us we hear the greeting "A happy new year to you!" and men look blithe and gay as if the passing away of another year of their lives were a thing to be merry over. The new year has been ushered in by many with worldly festivities of all kinds, and only comparatively few have spent its first hours in prayer before the Throne of God.

Nevertheless, although the world greets the passing away of time with a levity so deplorable, the salutation it gives and exchanges

at the new year is in itself a good one. It is one that, from this sacred place, I address to you with all my heart, wishing you and each one of you "a happy new year" in the truest sense that the words can bear.

And it may not be unprofitable on this first Sunday of the year to examine briefly the meaning of this common greeting, and see if it does not contain lessons which may help us to turn the wish into a reality.

1. Let us take each word in order. It is then a *happy* year I wish you.

There is implanted in every human heart by God Himself an insatiable thirst for happiness. Indeed it is the motive of everything we do, and so deeply rooted is it in our very nature that we could not have it otherwise even if we would. We all desire happiness, and we are all engaged in seeking for it. Unfortunately it is only very few who really understand in what true happiness consists. Some confound it with pleasure, others with fame, some think it is to be bought with gold, others would find it in the gratification of their sense of beauty, and the cultivation of aesthetic tastes. Others again, still more miserably deceived, would find it in the satisfaction of the base desires of their sensual nature. But whatever a man's ideal of happiness may be, he is always seeking it, and alas! too often death surprises him still engaged upon a fruitless search.

We Catholics indeed know full well that our true happiness consists in knowing God and loving Him. We have been taught from our childhood that the end for which we were created is to know, love and serve God in this life and to glorify Him for ever in the life to come. We are aware that no earthly delights, no created beauty, no finite and transitory pleasure can ever satisfy the thirst of our immortal souls which God has created for Himself alone. We know, with the certainty of faith, that only in God shall we find true happiness, only in His adorable will experience true repose, only in His loving Heart find the treasures that He has prepared for those who love Him.

Happiness then for us consists in knowing God better day by day, until in the unveiled splendors of the Beatific Vision we see Him face to face, and know as we are known. Then indeed shall we drink of His pleasures as of a river, then shall we be satisfied with His sweetness for all eternity.

And yet though we know and believe all this, how little do we

realize it, how little do we put it into practice! The miasmas of the world rise thickly around us and obscure our view, the maxims of the world are too often the guides by which we frame our lives, they sound so loudly in our ears, that the still small voice of conscience passes unheeded. We must do as others do, and we often end in doing worse, because we have uneasy consciences and guilty qualms.

How strangely do the Beatitudes of our dear Lord's first sermon sound in our ears! "Blessed, that is: happy, are the poor and the meek, the mourners and the clean of heart, yes, even they who are persecuted for justice sake."

What? Is it possible that true happiness is to be found there—that in seeking "to make my pile" I am in truth turning my back on the very good I am looking for, that in throwing myself into worldly pleasures I am losing the joys of eternity? Is it possible that after all the truly happy are those poor nuns, for instance, who shut themselves up behind convent grates to pray and suffer and do penance till the angel of death comes to release them? Can it be that the less I had, the happier I should be, that if I gave way to the poor the money I now waste on myself, I should find a truer pleasure than any I now taste, that if I wept over my past sins instead of trying to forget all about them, I should be really happier now as well as hereafter, that if I troubled to keep a closer watch over my eyes and thoughts, over my reading and my conversation, over my desires and my imaginations, I should indeed taste a joy which now I know not?

Well, dear brethren, it is Jesus who tells you this, not I, and He can neither deceive you nor be deceived. Do you remember that exquisite story of the Seraphic St. Francis, which we read in the *Fioretti*? How one day when he was on a journey with his beloved companion, Brother Leo, he asked him in what consisted perfect happiness. And after making various suggestions, and rejecting them, the saint at last cried out: "Supposing Brother that we arrive at St. Mary of the Angels all drenched with rain and trembling with cold, all covered with mud and exhausted from hunger, and if, when we knock at the convent gate, the porter should come angrily and ask us who we are; if after we have told him that we are two of his brothers he should answer angrily, 'what you say is not the truth, you are but two impostors going about to deceive the world, and take away the alms of the poor,

begone, I say;’ if he refuses to open to us, and leaves us outside exposed to the snow and rain, suffering from cold and hunger till night arrives—then if we accept such injustice, such cruelty and such contempt without being ruffled, and without murmuring, believing with humility and charity that the porter really knows us, and that it is God who makes him speak thus against us, O Brother Leo, write down that this is a cause for perfect joy.”

. . . And now, brother, listen to the conclusion. Above all the graces and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit which Christ gives to His friends, is the grace of overcoming oneself, and accepting willingly, out of love to Christ, sufferings, injuries, discomforts and contempt; for in all the other gifts of God we can not glory, but in the cross of tribulation and affliction; because, as the apostle says: “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Saviour Jesus Christ.” But St. Francis was extravagant, you say—well he is a canonized saint, and one who of all the other saints seems to have been most closely conformed to the likeness of His Crucified Lord. And perchance he knew more of what true happiness really is than we do, for he had tasted the pleasures of this world and had found them stale and unprofitable compared to those supernatural joys for which he gave them up. St. Augustine too, who had, in his wild youth, drained the cup of pleasure to the dregs, assures us he found more joy in one hour which he spent in weeping over his past sins than in all his life before.

It would be well for us then, my dear brethren, if this new year is to be really happy, to make sure that we are going the right way to find what we seek.

Do you still doubt, in spite of the assurances of our Lord and His saints, that happiness consists in the abnegation of self that we may give ourselves wholly to God? Well, if it be so, go and see for yourselves! Go to some cloister, of the most austere order known to the church, seek out a convent of Carmelites or Poor Clares, nuns whose whole life is spent in prayer and penance. Day and night they pass in prayer before the altar, utterly cut off from the world and all it holds dear, their clothing is coarse and rough, their food scanty and unappetizing, they sleep on hard boards and afflict their innocent bodies with voluntary mortifications that would make the worldling shudder even to think of; not content with all this, they thirst for yet more suffering, their daily prayer is that of St. Teresa, “*Aut pati aut mori*,”

"Lord, give me suffering or death," they offer themselves as victims to the divine justice for the sins of men, and become as it were the lightning-conductors of the wrath of God. The world, as it passes by their high enclosure walls speaks pityingly or contemptuously of the blighted lives and broken hearts hidden behind them. Some indeed affect to pose as champions of the oppressed and demand that the secrets of these prison-houses should be laid bare, and the poor victims of priestly tyranny rescued from a living death!

But those who go to visit them, those fortunate ones who have a sister or a friend there, or those who merely go to ask for prayers or charity, *they* know the truth. They will tell you that nowhere in all the world around are to be found such gaiety of heart, such bright and joyous tones, such glad and peaceful faces, such a store of innocent mirth and laughter. They are so happy that they can not conceal it, if they would, their joy overflows from the depths of their childlike hearts, till it beams in their faces, transfigures their features, and at last enkindles and irradiates the cold, dull hearts of those who know nothing of the secret of its source.

Do I wish you then such happiness as theirs? Ah, indeed, if you could merit that, you would in truth be blessed. But at least you may seek it where they have sought and found it, without leaving the daily round, the common task of your present life—God is everywhere, God is beside and around you, and it is in Him, and in Him alone that you will find true happiness and peace.

2. And the year is to be *new* as well as happy, is it not?

A new year? It can not help being new! But I wish you a new year in the fullest sense of the term. As our poet says:

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow.
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

"Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

For what do we mean by the old and the new? Holy Scripture speaks often of "the old man" and "the new man," and we are

warned to put off the old man with his affections and concupiscence and to put on the new man. We have to become new men through the power of Jesus Christ. And this is what I wish you in the new year.

For the christian life is made up of continual fresh beginnings. Every new day brings its new graces, its new opportunities of serving God, its new call to us to awake out of sleep and begin with renewed vigor the conflict against our sleepless foes. And if this is true, how much more forcibly should the warning come home to us at the beginning of a new year. The old one has fled beyond recall, with all its wasted opportunities and misused graces, with its hopes and fears, its checkered joys and sorrows, and which of us does not need to sigh over much that has passed with it?

But the new year is our own. Its golden opportunities are ours to use, it offers to us graces which may transform our very lives, if we will only accept and use them.

"Now I *begin* to be a disciple," said that aged servant of Christ, Ignatius of Antioch, as he approached his martyrdom. Let us echo his words to-day! We will begin again, with all our hearts, will we not?

As we look back on the past we see it strewn with the graves of dead opportunities and wasted graces, but instead of idly grieving over them, we will rather turn our faces heavenward and with renewed hope and vigor set out bravely on our way. The past is useful to us only as a warning of the dangers that beset us, the future we leave to God, the present is our own. Let us, then, forgetting those things that are behind, press forward earnestly to the goal, trusting indeed not in our own strength, for we have had ample experience as to what that is worth, but wholly in the mercy and the help of our God. "*Sursum Corda.*" "Lift up your hearts unto the Lord!"

But this progress must needs be slow and we must not be impatient if we sometimes stumble on our way. And in order to make our resolution practical and definite it will be well for us to choose out one virtue which we will specially strive to win, one ruling passion which we will set ourselves to conquer. Our enemies are so many and so strong that we can not hope to slay them with one blow. "If every year," says the author of the *Imitation of Christ*, "if every year we should root out *one* vice, we should become perfect men." We must set about so great

a work with method and precision, lest we be "as one that beateth the air." It will be well for each of us then to look into his heart and see what is the chief obstacle to his spiritual progress, what sacrifice God asks of him first and foremost, what grace is most necessary to the welfare of his soul. It may be that some of us will find that before we can do anything else we have to clear our souls from the defilement of mortal sin; and for them the first duty of the new year will be a humble and penitent confession. To most of us perhaps the task we wish to undertake will appear bewildering and the difficulty will be to know where to begin. In that case let us also lay our consciences bare before some enlightened minister of Christ, and humbly seek his help and counsel.

Then, by God's grace, we may hope to begin well, and if we only lean throughout upon His mighty arm, we may confidently hope that what has thus been well begun will eventually be crowned with success. Then will this new year have been new indeed for us, a year of new happiness as yet unknown, of new joys hitherto untasted, of new graces that will make this life a heaven on earth.

3. And the last word of the salutation, has a meaning too for thoughtful hearts. I wish you "a happy new year"—a year—but how indeed do we know that we shall live to see a year complete?

How many are there who receive this good wish to-day who have in reality but a few months, or weeks, even perhaps a few days before them? Certain it is that of us who are here gathered together, some at least will never see another year.

Last year I was giving a mission in a colliery village in the North of England. While preaching on death, I made a like remark. Hardly had I left the place, when I heard that one who had attended the mission with marked attention and piety, and seemingly in the best of health, had already been summoned to his last account. The mission had been his preparation for death.

Indeed, the time is short. We are standing on the brink of eternity. To-day is the acceptable time, the day of salvation. It may well be that this new year with its call to a new life may be God's last grace for some among you. "To-day, if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts." I repeat that it is morally certain, that before the sands of this new year have been run out, one or other of us at least will have passed into eternity. It may be you

or it may be I, it may be many or it may be only one or two, but some there certainly will be. May God in His mercy grant that when He cometh He may find us watching!

And so, I wish you once more "*A happy new year.*"

OCTAVE OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

BY THE REV. P. C. YORKE.

And they called His name Jesus.—Gospel of Feast of Circumcision.

SYNOPSIS.—*New Year's day a day of good resolutions for all, even for us. Life is not steady progress onward and upward. We rise and fall. Therefore we need good resolutions—a practice also commended by worldly experience and the Scripture. Resolutions fail because without Christ we can do nothing. With Christ we can do all things in Faith, in Prayer, in Penance, in the Eucharist. By adopting these means we shall have a happy new year in keeping our resolutions.*

New Year's day is proverbially the day of good resolutions. Between one day and another it is hard to see any difference. The same sun rises to-day that rose yesterday, the same sky is over our heads, the same earth under our feet. We awoke New Year's morning the same men we lay down the night before. We had not between the darkness and the dawn suffered any strange change. Yet somehow we felt that this was different from other days and that we were different. The associations connected with the day compelled us to look backward and to take stock of the past twelve months; they warned us to look forward and to prepare for the future. Hence it is that even the most worldly men signalize this day by some attempt to live up to their higher selves. They may fail—and the failure of New Year's resolutions has become a by-word—but at least for a moment they have approved the better things and have caught a glimpse of the cool streams, and the smiling fields and the shady groves of the Garden of God.

Times and seasons which thus seem of themselves to preach penance should not be despised. God calls men in many ways. The sun and the moon were also set in the firmament of heaven for signs, and there are times of acceptance and days of visitation. When, therefore, the very season sings to us *Sursum Corda*, "lift up your hearts," we should be ready to respond "We lift them up to the Lord." When all around us there is a noise as of men making ready for a new journey, we too should have our loins girt and our staves in our hands. This is the season of good resolutions. Why should we appear before God empty? "To-day if ye hear His voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation, according to the day of temptation in the wilderness; where your fathers tempted me; they proved me and they saw my works."

The way of human life has been likened to a great altar stairs that sweeps up to the mercy seat of the Almighty. We figure men erect of form, with eyes fixed upon the light, advancing and ascending, step above step into the very tabernacle of God. When, therefore, we consider ourselves and our own progress we are tempted to despair. We climb painfully, we stumble, we are dragged down. The light is blurred, the very stairs grow dim, we grope in vain, and helpless and hopeless, we lie down in the mire.

But, dear brethren, it is our human pride that has deceived us. To few, indeed, is it given to reach God by the way of innocence. We rather have to go a long journey, up many a hill and down many a dale, by moor and fen, by swamp and river, with many a defeat and many a fall, before we come to the mountain of God and the City of Sion. We must realize our true condition. To-day we are strong, to-morrow weak. To-day we hoard, to-morrow we squander our hoardings in an hour. Our life is not a steady progress onward and upward. It is rather a series of advances and reverses, of victories and defeats. As the waves of the sea are ever rising and falling so it is with our lives. Our progress is like the progress of the tide. With the saints every wave bears their bark a little higher than that which preceded it. They are riding to harbor on the flowing tide. The sinner is slowly but surely sweeping into the abyss with the ebb.

Realizing these facts, the masters of the spiritual life insist upon the necessity and utility of good resolutions. They warn us that it is our duty frequently to consider the progress of our lives, to take note of our weaknesses, to mark our failures. They advise us to pro-

vide for the future by guarding against the dangers that will beset us; by profiting from the experience of our failures. Not once a year or twice; not once a month or twice, but every day they counsel us to enter into ourselves to discover the state of our souls and to make such dispositions and preparations as will enable us to retrieve our losses and to meet the fiery assaults of the most wicked one.

Such a practice indeed is commended to us by the very experience of the world. If a merchant forgets to keep himself acquainted with the condition of his business he will soon have no business to attend to. What would you think of a manufacturer who did not know and did not care to know the price of the raw material, the rate of wages, the condition of the markets, who never inspected his plant, who never looked at his books? Is it not necessary for him to survey the field of his operations every day, to know what is coming in and what is going out. If he loses money one week he must watch for the next week so that he may retrieve it. If he fails in one enterprise, the experience of his failure enables him to succeed in another. Eternal vigilance is with him the price of success and day by day he lays his plans like a good general, and is not disheartened even when at times they fail, for he has long learned that victory is always the child of defeat.

In the same way we too must keep well acquainted with the condition of our souls. The world is lost for want of thinking. "With desolation is all the land made desolate because there is none that considereth in his heart." We must see where we have failed and why we have failed. We must understand wherein we have succeeded and why we have succeeded. Night by night we must inspect the works of the day, and morning by morning we must resolve to bind up that which was broken, to strengthen that which was weak and to preserve that which was strong.

Of course we know, dear brethren, that there is no end to the making of good resolutions, and hell is said to be paved with them. It is true that resolutions of themselves, no matter how well considered, are of small avail. Of the millions of resolutions that were made on New Year's day how many did survive the night, how many lasted until now, how many will last until the end of the month? While most of the resolutions were lightly made and therefore lightly broken, some have been dictated by experience and necessity, have been well thought out and have been wisely put into action; yet they go with the rest; and the wise and the foolish lie in the common

ruin. What then is it that is wanting? The feast with which the Church begins the year supplies the answer. It is not without reason that the beginning of the year coincides with the naming of our Lord. It is to us a solemn warning that as we should begin everything in the Name of Jesus, as the only means by which we can bring our enterprises to a happy result is in the power of the same Name.

This is one of the fundamental truths of Christianity, that man's own natural resources avail him nothing. No matter how rich or powerful or wise he may be, of himself he can do nothing. He may plot and plan, he may desire and strive; he may put forth stupendous exertions, he may accomplish great results, the world may ring with his name, generations may sit at his feet; but without the grace of Christ, he is nothing. He has taken great steps but they were outside the true way, and you know, dear brethren, that no matter how swift we run, we shall never reach our end if we are not on the right road.

Now the corresponding truth is that in Christ we can do all things. He was called Jesus, the Saviour, because in Him should all the nations find deliverance. "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." When the Apostles stood before the high priests and proclaimed that they had healed the lame man in the Name of Jesus they added: "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other Name under heaven given unto men whereby we must be saved." It was in His Name and in His Power that they, illiterate and ignorant men, went out into the world and converted it. It was in His Name and in His Power that old men and tender maidens faced the great ones of the earth and suffered every torture rather than betray the faith. It was in His Name and in His Power that the wicked turned from their evil ways and the wanton became chaste, and the thief honest, and the proud humble and the violent meek. The history of Christianity is the history of the Power of Christ and the triumphs of His Name. Nothing is hard or impossible to Him. He is mighty in small things as well as in great. As the Creator's powerful care is shown in the lilies of the field as well as in the giant orbs of heaven, so the might of Christ works in the soul of the lowliest and most sinful of His children, as efficaciously as when He upholds His Church against her worldly enemies or casts down men of blood and iron from their thrones.

Therefore, dear brethren, if resolutions come to naught it is because we trust in ourselves and not in the power of Him who alone can save us. "Unless the Lord doth build the house they labor in vain that build it." Therefore the lesson we must learn at the entrance of the year is that all our resolves must be signed with the Name of Jesus and must be energized by His Power. "I am the door. By me if any man enter in he shall be saved; and he shall go in and go out and shall find pastures."

Neither is this a vague advice or an empty generalization. Christ who wishes to save us gives us also the means of salvation. He not only inspires us with good thoughts and holy desires but He puts in our hands the means to realize these thoughts and to accomplish these desires. In the first place He gives us the gift of faith. No man can do anything unless he believes. A thousand resolutions are lost on a faint heart. The man who believes he will fail must fail. To succeed we need faith and confidence not in ourselves but in Christ in us. "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you shall say unto this mountain: Remove from hence thither and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you." "I can do all things," saith the Apostle, "In Him who strengtheneth me."

In the second place He gives us prayer. A good resolution is in itself a kind of prayer. It lifts our hearts to God. We stretch out our hands in hope and take hold of the hem of Christ's garments. The same virtue that went out from Him in the beginning to turn our hearts to Him, can alone keep us steadfast. If we ask for it we shall receive it in measure heaped up and overflowing. Without it our good resolutions shall fail as a plant without water. With it no evil shall overtake us. "Let us go with confidence to the Throne of Grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid."

In the third place we have the healing of the sacrament of Penance. When through our weakness we sink on the road, when we are carried away by the violence of passion, when through sheer disloyalty we are false to Christ, even then He does not desert us. Temptation will come to us to forget our resolves, to cease the striving, to lie contented in the mire; but over and above the temptation will be heard His voice calling from the mercy seat, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." At His feet in the confessional we lay the burden of our transgres-

sion, from His uplifted hand we receive new courage to rise and face forward manfully on the straight and narrow way.

Lastly there is Himself. Best and kindest of all friends, He will go with us side by side even unto the end. Having come to save us He spares nothing that we may be safe. He gave us His example, His sufferings, His teachings, His mother, His saints. He will hold nothing back. He gives us Himself. In the Holy Communion He comes and dwells in our souls and is made bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. This is the Bread of Life that sustains us in our journey through this valley of tears. This is the Food in whose strength we can walk even unto the mountain of God.

You see, therefore, dear brethren, that the God who inspires us with good resolutions gives us also the means to keep them. If we fail the fault is not His but ours. If we are in earnest, if our resolutions are not mere words, we will bend ourselves like men to the task and we will neglect no means of help. The man who resolves to warm himself does not keep away from the fire, the man who resolves to grow strong does not refrain from food and drink. Let us therefore surround our good resolutions to-day with all these aids. Plant your feet firmly upon the rock of your salvation which is Christ. Remember that He has promised to give whatsoever we ask in prayer never doubting. Fear not the tribunal of His mercy, the sacrament of forgiveness and consolation; but above all seek the strength of His Holy Table, the Bread of Life and the Chalice of Benediction for he that cometh thereto shall never hunger and he that drinketh thereof shall never thirst. Thus the new year which we have begun will be full of happiness, for there is no happiness like the doing of God's will, and never is a man so full of peace as when he forgets the things that are behind and stretches himself to the things that are before and presses forward to the mark which is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

GROWTH IN HOLINESS.

BY THE VERY REV. F. C. DOYLE, O.S.B.

“And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.”—Luke ii. 52.

SYNOPSIS.—By seeming to grow in wisdom and in grace in proportion as He grew in age, the lesson which Our Lord wishes to give us is, that we should grow in holiness as we advance in age. Therefore, let us consider our (1) obligation to grow in holiness, and (2) the means that will enable us to do so.

(1) To grow in holiness means to tend to perfection. This perfection is of two kinds—that which is of necessity and that which is only of counsel. The laity are bound to tend to that perfection which is called “of necessity,” by observing the commandments. In proof of this we have the words of St. Paul, Ephes. i. 4; of St. Peter, I. Epist. i. 16; of St. John, I. Epist. ii. 15. The Apostles learned this obligation from Our Lord, St. Luke xiv. 26. By Baptism, the Christian binds himself to aim at this perfection, nor is he able to pause in its attainment and be content with that degree of it which he may have acquired. He must go on striving to advance more and more. In proof of which statement we have St. Augustine’s words to Demetria. Epist. 131.

(2) Granting, then, this obligation of tending to perfection, let us next consider the means that will enable us to persevere in our striving to secure it. Besides the means usually recommended for this purpose, we suggest one that will spur us on continually to make use of them. This is daily examination of conscience which by showing us our failures, defects and sins will urge us not to desist from our efforts. To be efficient this examination must be preceded by prayer; it must be made in God’s presence; it must not be made as a matter of routine; it must be made with regularity. With these conditions, our examination will have upon us a stimulating effect; it will urge us on to perfection. Therefore, bear in mind that the lesson given you to-day is a lesson of growth in holiness. This growth is of obligation, an obligation pointed out to you by the Apostles, by their Master. You can not stand still, nor can you be content with the degree of it which you may have acquired. You must continue to advance. In order to spur yourself onwards, never fail to make a daily examination of conscience. That examination will cause you ever to push onwards, and when the great Master shall come to judge your work, He will find you engaged in the accomplishment of His will—growing in holiness, a holiness which He will then make perfect.

It was the opinion of St. Athanasius* and of St. Cyril† that the human nature of Christ by degrees drew from His divine nature greater wisdom and grace, in proportion as He advanced in age.

* Contra Arianos Sermo. 4.

† Thesaurus, Lib. x.

The rest of the Fathers, however, taught that though Jesus from the moment of His conception was full of wisdom and of grace—a fulness due to His humanity on account of its union with the divinity, yet that He only gradually made manifest to men this wisdom and this grace, and that in this sense He is said to advance in wisdom and in grace, just as the sun, though having ever in itself the same light and heat, is said to increase in these two qualities as it advances toward midday. By this apparent growth in wisdom and in grace, the lesson which Christ wishes to teach us is that we should daily grow in holiness as we advance in age and in strength. To impress this lesson upon you, I will to-day point out to you the obligation of thus growing in holiness and the means which, with the aid of divine grace, will insure this growth.

1. To grow in holiness, is only another way of saying that we are to advance in Christian perfection. That perfection is of two kinds, the perfection acquired by the observance of God's Commandments, and the perfection acquired by the practice of the counsels in addition to the observance of the Commandments. This last mentioned kind of perfection is that aimed at by those who make profession of the Religious Life. The other, namely that which may be won by the observance of the Commandments and the fulfilment of the duties incidental to one's state of life, is the perfection at which the laity are bound to aim—toward which they are bound to tend.

You will observe that I say "toward which they are bound to tend," for it is impossible to reach it during this life, the perfection attainable here being only a relative perfection, relative to our state and condition, and consequently, having in it degrees of more or less, whereas perfection in its strict sense is absolute, complete, full, and it will be ours only after we shall have won our way into heaven. Hence we call this tending to perfection, a growth in holiness, an increase, an advance from what is imperfect to what is more perfect. Consequently, many of the great ascetical writers term it the spiritual art, and the means employed in securing this advance, the implements or tools of perfection, so that prayer, devout reading, mortification of the flesh and the various other practices of the spiritual life are just what a pen and a grammar are to a schoolboy, brushes and a palette to painter, chisels and mallet to a sculptor. It is by the diligent, continuous, persevering use of these implements of perfection that the Christian is to advance, daily to become more perfect in charity, in humility, in purity of heart, virtues which are

said to be the constituent parts of what is termed Christian perfection.*

With these preliminary notions before your minds, I may now proceed to prove to you that you are bound to grow in holiness, to continually tend to perfection. St. Paul is urging upon his converts this obligation when he tells them that God chose them, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be *holy and unspotted* in His sight in charity (Ephes. i. 4). In terms still more formal, St. Peter points out to the faithful this obligation when he says: "Be holy in all manner of conversation, as children of obedience fashioned after the model of Him who has called you, for it is written: 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (I. Peter i. 16). Now, in these extracts from the writings of these two great Apostles, we may remark that, by holiness both they and their fellow Apostles mean that perfection of which we are speaking, a perfection consisting in a continual tendency toward or growth in holiness, the result of which is a high degree of sanctity. For they require from the faithful, from those who had accepted their teaching, virtues which suppose it. "Love not the world nor the things which are in the world," says the Beloved Disciple, writing to his converts (I. John ii. 15). Speaking to the married, St Paul says: "Let those who have wives, be as though they had none, and they that use this world as if they used it not (I. Cor. vii. 29). Whence had they learnt this obligation binding in conscience those who were engaged in the ordinary avocations of everyday life? It was from the lips of their Divine Master Himself; for, when preaching to the people, He said that no man could be His disciple unless he practised those very virtues the exercise of which implies growth in holiness, tendency to perfection. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he can not be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26).

The perfection consequent upon the renunciation here spoken of is thought by some to be that perfection which is only of counsel; but, in a measure, it may be said to be the perfection at which all are bound to aim, inasmuch as all are bound to hate their parents, wives, children and brethren, that is to say, to give up the love of them and of even their own life, whenever that love opposes itself to the love of Christ. To the attainment of this perfection they bound themselves by the solemn promise made in Baptism. In the recep-

* See "Principles of Religious Life," Chap. I., Secs. 1-4.

tion of that Sacrament, they undertook to renounce the devil, the world and the flesh. The accomplishment of that undertaking implies a continual striving after perfection; for, to renounce the devil means nothing else than to fight against his suggestions; to renounce the world means to oppose its maxims and its spirit; to renounce the *flesh* means to thwart its perverse inclinations. How can this be done except by the performance of actions which enable us to beat down the rebellious forces of our fallen nature and by so doing to keep daily and hourly growing in perfection. To secure this growth, we have to live in the world without being of the world; we have to carry the heavy load of the cross; to pardon enemies; to renounce the spirit of pride, of concupiscence, of self-love; to put off the old man and to clothe ourselves with the new man; to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. To do this is to tend to perfection; it is to grow in holiness; it is to advance in heavenly wisdom and in grace before God and before men.

Now, on hearing this, it may strike some one to ask: "Is it not possible for a God-fearing man to aim at only a certain degree of perfection and having obtained it, to be content with what he has acquired?" In response to this question there comes from all writers on asceticism or the practice of a devout life, a unanimous answer and that answer is, No. In this world they tell us nothing is unchangeable except God: "I am the Lord, and I change not" (Malach. iii. 6). As for men, they are always changing, they are never in the same state. They must, therefore, struggle to become better than they are, or they will become worse. They must force themselves to go forwards or they will go backwards. In reply to one of his correspondents who had consulted him on this very point, St. Augustine said:

"We cannot prevent ourselves from going backwards, except by forcing ourselves to go forwards. The moment that we desist from our efforts, we fall back. Not to advance is to recede. Hence, if we do not wish to go backwards, we must push on without ever giving ourselves a moment of repose" (Ad Demetrian. Epist. 131). Other Fathers liken the Christian in this world to a man seated in a boat on a swiftly flowing river. As long as he plies the oars, he makes some progress—the progress of at least not going backwards; but the moment he ceases to labor, he is carried down the stream. Hence, the necessity for growth, for efforts to push forwards. For God will not be satisfied with one who wishes to do nothing; be-

cause His will is not only that we should abstain from evil, but that we should do good. Therefore, in imitation of the Child Jesus who, as we have explained, advanced in wisdom and in grace as he advanced in age, we must continually endeavor to grow in holiness.

2. Admitting, then, our obligation to grow in holiness, the next question that naturally suggests itself to us is: "By what means shall we be able to make this progress?" The means for advancing in perfection, for growing in wisdom and in grace are manifold and various. We are recommended to pray fervently; to frequent the Sacraments; to deny ourselves; to be humble; to strive after purity of heart. All these means are excellent and they will, of a certainty, be made use of by those who are fired with the desire of growing in holiness. But what we want is something that will constantly remind us of the necessity for employing these means and will act as a spur to urge us on to use them. That something I consider to be—daily examination of conscience—by which the soul looks into itself, sees what it has done, what it has omitted to do, and the motives that have moved it to act. This careful scrutiny reveals to it its sins and its defects. It brings the soul face to face with them so that it is unable to ignore or to excuse them, It is made to know them, and knowing them, it is able to grieve for them, humbly to confess them, and to take measures which will prevent their recurrence—as we see was the result of this practice in the case of the Psalmist who was accustomed thus, every night, to search his spirit and cleanse it of its defects and sins: "I have thought on my ways and—I turned my feet into thy testimonies" (Ps. cxviii. 59). This examination points out to us not only our sins and our defects, but the virtues of which we are so lamentably in need. Seeing our poverty in this respect, our want of patience, of submission to God's will, of humility, of self-denial, of love of God and of our neighbor, we are spurred on to make efforts to acquire that of which we stand in need. We feel ashamed of our poverty and nakedness. We see ourselves as others see us. We catch a glimpse of our deformity, and that has upon us a wonderfully stimulating effect.

When this examination is neglected, it is easy for us to fancy that all is well with us. We are not aware of our ills or of our necessities. Our souls are then like houses that for a long time have been shut up; from which the light has been excluded; in which the dust has been accumulating; in which moths and vermin have

been peacefully accomplishing their work of destruction. Or, we may compare them to neglected gardens, in which both fruit and flowers are choked by a rank and luxurious growth of weeds.

Therefore, it is easy to see how healthful, how stimulating, how necessary is this daily examination of conscience for those who desire to grow in holiness, to make progress in the spiritual life. But, in order to be of any use, or of the use for which we deem it so important, this examination must be made with those conditions that will impart to it a keenness of vision from which nothing can escape. To secure these, it must be preceded by a brief and earnest prayer for light to know the number, the circumstances and the gravity of the sins and of the defects of which we may have been guilty during the course of the day that is past. Then, placing ourselves as it were before the tribunal of Christ, our scrutiny into ourselves must be made as if we were presently to answer the Great Judge for what we have done and for what we have omitted to do. This will give to our inquiry the exactitude which it demands. It will make the professional man ask himself whether he has thrown into the performance of his duties that care, that attention, that zeal to which his clients are entitled. It will urge the merchant to search narrowly into the methods by which he acquires his wealth. It will make the toiling masses ask themselves whether they have employed their time so as to advance their masters' interests. It will cause parents to ask themselves whether they have done all that God requires from them in watching over, directing and correcting the precious souls committed to their care.

While making this examination an everyday duty, we must carefully guard ourselves against engaging in it through mere routine. We shall escape this canker of the spiritual life, by entering upon our scrutiny with sentiments of deep humility and contrition. We are about to search the book of our conscience in the presence of the great Master and Judge. In it we are sure to find much that is reprehensible, much that is wilful. Therefore, the necessity for lowliness of mind and grief of heart: "I will recount to thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul" (Isa. xxxviii. 15). Lastly, in order that other and what we may consider to be pressing duties may never thrust this aside, a fixed time must be assigned for it, and that time must not be encroached upon by anything else, no matter how important it may seem to be. If the examination of conscience be made with these conditions, it will put the Christian man in the

same position as a careful, conscientious man of business who regularly and rigorously searches into his mercantile transactions. He knows exactly where he is; how he stands; what he owes; where he has to retrench; what he is able to expend. He is, consequently, ever pushed on to make fresh efforts; he is prevented from becoming remiss; from resting upon his oars; from falling asleep; from drifting down the stream and thus neglecting to grow in that holiness at which he is obliged to aim.

To grow in holiness—such is the lesson which our divine Lord thus early in His earthly life sets before us. He condescended to appear to grow in wisdom and in grace, that we might learn by His example to advance in Christian perfection in proportion as we advance in years. This present year is now only in its infancy. As it increases and at last wanes towards its end, endeavor to grow in holiness that, when it dies away and passes into eternity, you may, looking back upon its fleeting hours, be able to count many steps made on the upward grade towards perfection. Bear in mind that you are obliged to struggle upwards and onwards. You may not and you cannot stand still. You must push forward, otherwise you will go backwards and fail miserably in the purpose for which God gave you life. You were created by Him to aim at perfection and eventually to attain to it. Therefore, in order continually to spur yourself onwards; to keep awake your drowsy, sluggish will, never fail each evening before retiring to rest to search your spirit to see in what way you have failed and the reason why you have failed; what good you have done; what good you have omitted to do; what good you have marred by unworthy motives. Then, be sorry for what has been done amiss; resolve to do better on the following day and never weary of striving to grow in wisdom and in grace as you advance in age. Blessed shall you be, if when the great Master comes to demand an account of your stewardship, He shall find you thus occupied. He will be merciful to you. What is defective He will make good; what is good He will crown with an eternal reward. Then you will enter into the joy of your Lord, for you will have attained to that degree of perfection which He destined you to obtain.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME.

BY THE REV. THOMAS F. BURKE, C.S.P.

"There is no other name given to men whereby we must be saved."—Acts iv. 12.

SYNOPSIS.—1. In honoring a name we honor the person who bears it. 2. In earlier days, the name bestowed fitted the individual. Some names, divinely given. 3. Significance of the name Jesus. Many scenes recalled by It, but especially one, the Crucifixion. 4. The name bestowed by the Father, realized in the Son, and fulfilled by the Holy Spirit. 5. The reverent utterance of the name Jesus is an act of worship. (a) An act of faith, (b) an act of hope, and (c) an act of love. 6. Our duty to so love the name that it be inscribed upon our hearts.

1. The very name of one we love and honor is revered. As we praise the man in praising his great deeds: as we cherish any memento left by him because of himself: so too we love the name of a great character because of him that bore it. The word itself epitomizes his life; calls to memory his acts; and draws from our hearts the tribute that we would pay his person. If this be true in regard to the great men of the world, of those who have wrought great works upon earth, who, in the sphere of science or letters or military achievement, have performed mighty tasks, how much more should it be true of these souls that have triumphed in the science of the saints and have left the legacies of holy lives unto the world; and how infinitely more should it be true of that One who surpasses all others in glory as the sun outshines the stars, "the spotless mirror of God's majesty," the Saviour of mankind, *Jesus Christ*?

With the reasonable recognition, therefore, of the demands of the human heart, the church has set aside one feast day of the year to be consecrated to the honor of that name of names. Not content with inscribing it in her sanctuaries, not satisfied with the reverential acknowledgment of it which she has taught her children to give at all times, she has placed among the days of honor devoted to our Blessed Saviour one which calls attention, in a special way, to the meaning and the power of the glorious word, *Jesus*!

2. To-day the name by which a person is known, in the world of

his activity, is little more than a distinguishing, individualizing mark. The conditions of human life and the multitudes of human beings have made it necessary that names should be no more than this. In earlier days and less complicated civilizations, the name indicated something in connection with the one who bore it. Some circumstance of birth, some peculiarity of character, some physical quality, some official capacity, some mental power, some prowess in the hunt or in battle, some mighty achievement was chosen as the reason for the name that was bestowed. The name fitted the individual and his work.

In some rare instances in the history of mankind, names have been divinely given. With the power of prophecy, God or God's messenger has drawn back the veil that hides the future, and, beholding the life's work that was to follow, has ordained that the name bestowed upon the individual should be a characteristic one. The naming of John the Baptist, even in opposition to human wishes and human exertions, is an instance of this. In other cases, the power of God Himself interfered to change the name of those chosen to perform the works of Heaven. Thus did God bestow the name of Abraham, the father of nations, in view of the chosen people that were to be his descendants. Thus did Christ, our Saviour, give to Simon the name of Peter, the rock upon which His kingdom on earth was to be built. It was not strange, then, rather it was in entire keeping with God's way, that from the depths of infinite wisdom, the name of the Saviour should be chosen; that from the courts of Heaven the messenger of God's will should be sent to herald upon earth the holy name; that she, who, in submission to the Divine wish, had said: "Be it done unto me according to Thy Word," should, with like readiness accept and follow the command: "Thou shalt call His name *Jesus*, for He shall save His people from their sins!"

3. In that is the reason and the meaning of this divine name. "He shall save His people from their sins." Place that name upon your altars, for there it should be honored. Inscribe it on your processional banners, for there it should be raised aloft in triumph! Sound it with reverence from your pulpits, for there it should be preached with eloquence! Pronounce it in the administration of the sacraments, for there it should work with divine power; write it upon your hearts, for there it should be loved. But you can find no place where it can be inscribed with greater fittingness and

with truer meaning than that where His enemies placed it, above the cross of Calvary!

Many are the scenes and facts brought to our minds in the utterance of that sweet and holy name. We are borne back to the day when the great mystery of the incarnation was accomplished and the angel proclaimed that He should be called by the name of *Jesus*; to the time when Mary, hearkening to the hymns of heaven, placed her firstborn in the manger of Bethlehem; to the years when, as His first great suffering, He was made an exile through the hardness of man's heart; to the blessed home at Nazareth where, dwelling with Mary and Joseph, the Child was "subject to them;" to the scenes of His public ministry when He "went about doing good" and working the wonderful works that testified to His divine mission. With that name there rises the vision of a Man who astounded the world; who won men by His gentleness and kindness; who has exercised over humanity an influence surpassing the combined results of the lives of all the great and good; who, by His doctrine of pure faith and high morality, awakened in man the smoldering spark of his better nature and moved him again to seek the God whom he had forsaken. All these facts are borne in upon us by the sound of that name, as the scenes that are gone are often recalled by a strain of music. To all these, however, there is a climax, His baptism of blood. In that is the reason of the name; in that is its realization; in that is the fulfilment of prophecy; in that is the center whence the power of that name extends into the past and the future; in that is man's hope, for "He shall save His people from their sins."

4. "*Jesus of Nazareth*" written at the top of the cross! From out the depths of eternity, His Heavenly Father had gazed upon that name and had ordained the time and the circumstances which were to place it in such terrible relief. God, from the beginning, saw that man would one day rebel and send up the cry of refusal: "I will not serve;" He saw that, in His mercy, He could not condemn man forever; He saw that He would send forth His only begotten Son to receive the name of *Jesus*, to fulfil it; to become the Saviour of man.

The Beloved Son Himself, who was with God and who was God from the beginning, saw all this too; but especially in His human life was that vision before Him. Whether as a boy He smiled into the face of His Mother; whether in the days of His

childhood, he lived in every way as a child; whether as a man He accomplished the works of a man or the works of God; whether by his human charity He found an entrance into man's heart or spoke of heavenly things; whether He was received or rejected; whether He was loved or despised; whether He prayed in the solitude of the mountain wilderness or poured forth His burning loving words upon the multitude that gathered about, that cruel vision of His baptism of blood, of that Name written upon the wood of shame and ignominy, was ever before Him, calling to Him for its accomplishment.

The Holy Spirit saw that Name throughout the ages of man's existence, and in all His work for the sanctification of souls, knew that it was through this Name that He could find entrance into the hearts of men. Whether before that day or since, His grace, as it is powerful in the inspirations with which He favors men; as it is manifested in the unerring guidance of the church; as it is poured forth through the sacraments, could do its work only through the merits of *Jesus*, whose act of salvation was required that men might return to God.

5. As the first glory of the Holy Name is to be found in the great act of salvation of which it speaks, so its continued meaning and power are seen in the saving work that its humble, loving utterance accomplishes in individual souls to-day. "In the name of *Jesus* every one should bow." Reverently spoken, therefore, it is an act of deepest worship. *Jesus!* Speak the word, and you have made an act of faith. You have professed your belief in Him who taught men the way of salvation, who said that He was the way, the truth and the life. You have yielded the homage of your intellect to Him who had the power and the right to teach men the things of God. Speak the word in the true sense, earnestly, sincerely, devoutly, and you have accepted Him in the true sense of the word; you have accepted Him completely, not only acknowledging Him, but willingly drinking in every word that He has given to man, every doctrine that He has taught, every truth that He has proposed, every moral teaching that He has inculcated. You have, in that utterance, bowed the head and prayed: "Lord, that I may see!" You have worshiped Him as God and man, and, as a reward, across the plains of the ages, over the lapse of centuries, you have heard Him give the answer: "According to thy faith be it done unto thee!"

Jesus! Speak the word, and you have made an act of hope. You have brought up before your soul the vision that gives you the right to hope. Despite the fall of the human race, despite your own sins, despite the cruel persistence of the powers of evil, despite the discouragement of many temptations, and the bitter weariness of the warfare of life, despite the weakness of the flesh and the infidelity of the world, in that name your soul is raised above the struggling, tossing strife and empowered to look into the very courts of heaven. Dreary indeed would be the world, and dreary the journey therein, were it not for that Name. Take it out of our life and all hope of release from our prison-house is taken with it. At best, we would be but stranded waifs upon a barren shore made desolate by sin; gazing with unsatisfied longing to the far off land of promise that we have forfeited. From out the skies there bursts in splendor the Saviour's name, and with its appearance there enters hope into the soul of man. It tells us that He has paid the price, that He has brought back humanity, and that, if we but will, we can find in Him the strength and the encouragement to fight the good fight bravely, and, despite our fears, to hope unto realization.

Jesus! Speak that word, and you have made an act of love. Through faith and hope you are enabled to utter it with that which surpasses these—love itself. If you were to ask the rabble that surrounded the cross upon Good Friday why that name of *Jesus* was written above the form that hung upon the wood, they would tell you that it was the name of one who had blasphemed against God. If you were to ask your own soul why this name was there inscribed, you would be compelled to answer: "It was because of my sins." But if it were given you to gaze with the spiritual eyes of faith, to read what the eyes of the executor and the sinner could not see, you would behold, burning with the light of heaven and emblazoned in letters of gold, another word beside that sacred name, and that word—*Love!* It was God's love for man that gave unto Him the name; it was God's love for man that saw what it signified accomplished. Love given demands love in return; and no one that knows its meaning can utter that name without the quickening of the heart-pulses, without the straining of the soul to God.

6. Surely the name of *Jesus* is a name of glory and power. It is a profession of faith; it is a cry of hope; it is an acknowledgment

of love. Visit the bedside of the dying saint; see him as life is ebbing away and the dawn of truer life and love is breaking; see him fix the eyes that are being dimmed by death in a steady gaze upon the crucifix that he clasps in his hand; listen to the last word of his voice, uttered with unspeakable affection, and you will hear the sound of the name *Jesus*.

Gaze back into the past and on some Roman holiday stand in the amphitheater of the Imperial City; behold a man, despised of men, an outcast about to meet his death; see approach the raging beasts ready to devour him; see the smile of heaven that lights up his countenance, and hear the martyr's last word in which he finds strength and courage—*Jesus!*

Behold to-day your own soul and the souls of others, surrounded by enemies of God, tried and baffled by the onslaughts of the world; behold them troubled and sorely tempted, perhaps sometimes sinking into the very depths of despair, and let them learn that as the dying finds comfort, as the martyr finds courage, so they, too, can find the grace to conquer, the strength to overcome in the simple cry of prayer that goes to heaven in the utterance of that sacred name—*Jesus!* For in that name is our salvation. We must love it, then, with all our hearts. Above the cross it is written and at the foot of the cross we must learn how to love it. If we look upon Him who has died for us and strive to understand the depth and extent of His suffering; if in spirit we stand with His Blessed Mother and, with some little of her devotion, attempt to grasp the meaning of it all; if, day after day and hour after hour, we labor to remove all sin from our lives, that our eyes may be pure to gaze upon Him; if, steadfastly and earnestly, we look with deepest love, then that inscription will find another resting place within each one of our hearts—the same, yet transformed—*“Jesus of Nazareth, King of my Soul!”*

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.

ON PRAYER.

BY THE VERY REV. P. A. SHEEHAN, D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—I. (a) *The unfailing kindness of Christ when on earth in answering prayer.* (b) *Our petitions seem often to be unanswered.*

II. *The reason—We ask without reverence and earnestness.*

III. *Compare our prayers with those of the men whom Christ healed. Compare especially with the prayer of the leper in this gospel. Humility, confidence, perseverance, attention, affection.*

IV. *We do not sufficiently realize our needs and our sinfulness.*

V. *All should pray, and pray for all men.*

You will have noticed, M. B., that if there was one thing more than another in which the life of Christ was uniform, it was in the increasing kindness and charity which he showed to the suffering and afflicted and the unhappy. He professed to have the power of alleviating evil. His sacred name, Jesus, testified the mission upon which He had been expressly sent to destroy evil of every kind and to impart happiness of every kind; and the narrative of His evangelists forces us to believe that never was a title more worthily borne, never were professions more fully accomplished, never was a mission more perfectly fulfilled. There is not a single instance on record of a prayer unheard by Him, of a petition despised by Him, of even one afflicted creature that left His presence unrelieved or unconsolated. Once and again He seems to hesitate, and even to rebuke those that claimed His compassion, but the end always shows that His coldness and indifference were only feigned; it was not His heart that was changed, but He put their faith on trial desiring that His mercy might not appear altogether gratuitous, that their confidence in Him might be an example to others, and fearing too, perhaps, that if His graces were lightly bestowed, they would be very easily forgotten. But this mercy and charity of Our Blessed Lord does not surprise us, it is just what we expect, we should be disappointed if it were otherwise. The wonder is, that apparently the mercy of God is at an end, that the reign of charity ceased when He left our earth, that He no longer stoops, and listens to petitions, and answers them, that His charity and mercy have grown invisible with Himself. For do we not pray, and yet remain

unheard? Have we not spoken to God and God has not answered? Have we not cried to God, and heard no answering voice, but only the echo of our cries? And when we compare our long, elaborate prayers into which we have even tried to throw a certain amount of pathos, which we have spoken with the best intentions, with those short ejaculations addressed to Our Lord by the sick and the poor and the maimed whom He healed, we are tempted to think that prayer is only a certain formula of worship which we are bound to observe, but that it is madness to expect the grace and assistance which we crave. Again and again you have made the best resolutions in confession, again and again have you been told that if you pray, you will infallibly persevere in grace, but that if you do not pray you will infallibly fall in sin, and you have prayed, so you think, and persevered in prayer, you have said your morning prayers, you have said your night prayers, perhaps you say the rosary; still upon the very first temptation you relapse into sin. A momentary thought about past confession, a momentary struggle with yourself, a half-stifled exclamation to God "I am sorry for it, Lord, but I can't help it." and then it is all over. Now, is it that the hand of God is shortened, is it that God has refused to assist you, is it that He has been deaf to your prayers? Do you believe that the Mother of God is not what she is said to be, "Help of Christians," "Refuge of Sinners."

The truth is, M. B., that God's hand is not shortened, nor His mercy lessened, that the same Sacred Heart that melted with pity at the sight of misery here upon earth is equally broken with sorrow in heaven at the sight of your unspeakable misery in sin, the truth is that the Mother of God is everything she is said to be, and more than even her most devoted client has ever said, all-powerful by the grace of Her Son and the very personification of mercy and charity and love above all for sinners, but the truth is too that you never prayed either to Jesus or to Mary, you have gone through a set form, you have run your beads through your fingers, perhaps attentively, perhaps even devoutly, you have read your prayerbook, and read it very well, but you have never prayed, never prayed as the leper in to-day's gospel, never prayed like the centurion, never prayed like the thief upon the cross, never prayed like Magdalen, who had neither beads nor book, nor spoke even a single word, but merely wept over the feet of Jesus.

Of course I am speaking now of prayer in its narrowest and

strictest signification, prayer alone properly so called, that is, petitioning God for grace. And I say that the reason Almighty God seems to be so reserved with us, is that we either do not approach Him with our petitions at all or do not approach Him as we ought. I do believe that Catholics are not wanting in the reverence due to God, that they enter largely into the spirit of the Church which offers to God the sublimest worship in the daily sacrifice of the altar, that there are many, very many Catholics that feel for our Divine Lord a personal love almost equal to that of the apostles who saw Him, and whose hearts burned within them when He spoke to them, but if we would put together our petitions to Almighty God for personal strength or guidance, or assistance, and sift them and examine them and analyze them, each one of us would find that amongst all those petitions there is scarcely one deserving the name of prayer, scarcely one, which if addressed to ourselves by the veriest beggar, we would not take as a personal insult rather than an appeal for mercy. And so the wonder really is, not that God turns a deaf ear to our prayers, but that God does not listen to our prayers to punish us well for addressing ourselves in such a manner to Him.

The reason of all this is not far to seek. It is to be found in the little knowledge we have of ourselves, in the unconsciousness of our own misery in which we spend our lives, in our ignorance of our dependence upon God, in self-deception as to our wants and necessities. For those in the habit of mortal sin the reason of not praying to God is, that they can not bear to look at themselves, can not bear to look upon the hideous leprosy that covers their souls, and therefore can not bring themselves to ask Almighty God to heal them. Now, the reason of the success of every petition addressed to Christ upon earth was that every petition was possessed of every condition which God requires in prayer before He listens to us. And why was every prayer of these so perfect? Why was every petition addressed to Christ a perfect model of what prayer ought to be? Because each of those afflicted ones who applied to Christ for succor did so because he keenly felt his necessity, and was perfectly confident that he had only to ask Christ for assistance, and that which he needed would be granted unto him. The blind man knew that he was blind, and he prayed to see the light of heaven, and the faces of those whom he knew by their kind deeds and gentle words of sympathy to

be his friends; the dumb man knew he could not speak, knew that his lips were sealed for ever, and he keenly felt his inability to hold converse with his fellow men; the paralytic saw his trembling limbs over which he had not the slightest power, and he cried to God daily and hourly to free him from that living death; the leper was not blind to that fearful disease that consumed him, he saw, and painful though the sight was, he was powerless to remove it, the white, glistening scales with their rims of red that grew day by day until they left not an inch of him sound and whole, he saw that men shunned him, that everywhere he went there was the same cry "Room for the leper, room," until at last he had to go to die among the beasts. And now his heart did bound with joy, when he heard in his solitude that there was a hope yet for him, that there was one called Jesus, Healer, Physician, Saviour, who could restore him to health, He had done so to others, He would do so to him. He required only to be asked. Only to be asked. Did the leper feel that condition burdensome? Did he complain that Jesus should exact that one condition? Did he murmur that Christ would not come to him? Did he go further and refuse to be healed, choosing rather his life of unspeakable misery than health and happiness? No, but he ran to the feet of Jesus, and he fell at those feet, and he adored Him and said, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." And promptly, and without a question, Jesus touched him and healed him. Why? Because the prayer of that leper was a perfect prayer. It was not wanting in a single condition, humility, confidence, perseverance, attention of mind, affection of heart. And that last condition, affection of heart or the simple desire to be healed, was the source of all the others. Humility was there. "A leper came, and adored Him," and that leper would have borne to be trodden under foot by all Jerusalem, if only in the end Christ would heal him. Perseverance was there, but Jesus did not demand it, because He saw that if He refused then to heal that leper, that leper would follow Him through His entire mission, follow him through Jerusalem, into the temple, back to Nazareth, through every stage and scene of His Passion, that he would not desist from praying, until his prayer was heard. And attention of the mind was there—that leper suffered no distraction, either voluntary or involuntary. He had no room in his mind for a single thought about anything but the subject of his prayer and Him to

whom it was addressed. He did not see the multitude around him. He saw only the face of Jesus. He did not hear their remarks upon himself, for he was eager to hear the words that would fall from the lips of Jesus. His whole attention, every faculty of his soul was concentrated on the words he had spoken to Jesus, and the words Jesus would speak to him. The multitudes wondered at him, he did not heed their wonder; they shrank from him in loathing, he was heedless of their gestures of disgust, he was as entirely free that moment from human respect as St. Philip Neri or St. Alphonsus, because one idea alone possessed his mind, and that was the wish to be cured. He knew what he had suffered in the past, he reviewed in one moment all the misery he had borne, the physical pain, the mental anguish, the self-loathing, the horror of men, the despair, the craving for death which would not come to relieve him, he saw things which made him shudder and he foresaw that all this sorrow and pain awaited him still, that the future would reproduce the past, that if Christ did not hear him now, he had only to return to his misery, which would be all the greater because his hopes had been raised only to be disappointed, and if only now he prayed to Christ, Christ would infallibly heal him. And therefore he did pray, pray as one in despair, pray as one hanging betwixt life and death, pray not with his lips alone (that was the least of it), but pray by his looks, by his gestures, by his emotion, by his intense eagerness, pray from the depths of his heart, that would be broken if his prayers were refused. And Jesus saw all this and he healed him. He could not turn away that leper, He could not refuse his petition, He, who hears even the preparation of the heart, who prepares us by His graces, when we are about to address Him, and closes our lips whilst He blesses us, He could not be heedless of the ardent, fervent prayer that was addressed to Him by the leper.

✓ Contrast, M. B., with these words, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," the best prayer you or I offered to God, compare our coldness and indifference with the leper's eagerness, our mock humility, which is in reality Pharisaical pride, with his self abasement; compare our slothfulness and weariness in prayer with the leper's alacrity, and his spirit of perseverance, that would take no refusal; compare our irreverence in prayer, our wilful distractions, our dissipation of mind, with his reverence and attention; compare our human respect in prayer, which makes us

seem to be bidding for the approbation of men, rather than asking for the mercy of God, with the complete absorption of the leper in the thought of his own misery and the compassion of Christ, and you can not fail to perceive that it is not the mercy of God has changed, but the attitude of men towards God, which makes God turn from men, whose sufficiency and pride are an abomination in His eyes. Do not say that Heaven is ungenerous, that the fountains of divine mercy are closed, rather say that men have forgotten themselves, and made themselves independent of heaven. The mercy of God is undiminished, but there are no demands for that mercy. The charity of God now is as great as when He gave His life for the world, and if we see but few examples of that charity, it is because there are few upon whom God can exercise it. It is not the age of the miracles that has passed away but the age of prayer. If men would pray now as they prayed in the ages of faith, we should behold miracles of grace that would perhaps surpass any of those the disciples witnessed upon earth. And whatever operations of grace you do behold in the world, attribute them solely and entirely to prayer. There can be no doubt that the anger of God hangs threateningly over this world of ours, and what restrains that anger, and prevents it from falling upon earth, and crushing it? The hands of Solitary Saints, upheld here and there throughout the world in prayer.

And why do we not pray, as the saints prayed, as the afflicted ones that ran to Christ to be healed? Because, unlike them, we do not know our misery, we do not know the need we have of God. Sin is no inconvenience to us, imperfections are no inconvenience to us, and the interests of God, of His church, of His Vicar, and the salvation of immortal souls and the relief of the souls in purgatory, are trifles about which we care so little that we do not even think it worth while to thank God for them when out of pure mercy He guards those interests, and effects the salvation of souls, and administers relief to His suffering saints.

Sin is no inconvenience to us. Therefore, we do not pray. And yet there are those that tell us that sin is a leprosy the most hideous that can be conceived, that in the eyes of God and His angels a soul in sin is an ulcerated soul. Christ did not shrink from the leper, "He touched him and healed him." He did not keep the leper at the distance, but came up close to him and

laid his hand upon that leper, revolting and painful though the sight of him must have been. But with all His mercy and charity Christ shrinks from and averts His face from a soul in sin, that relishes its sin, that will not part from its sin; but keeps its sin and its years of sin locked up in its soul, a leprous, hideous, loathsome, corrupting mass of iniquity, at which even that soul itself can not bear to look. And it is because it can not bear to see its own deformity, that it continues in sin. It is because it will not gaze upon its own loathsomeness and defilement, that therefore it will be healed. It has vague notion that it is in sin, it knows it is the object of God's anger and aversion, but will not look further, it takes a large, sweeping view over its life, but will not descend to particulars, it takes a momentary glance at itself, but hastily shuts out the sight, as one who inadvertently lifts the cover off a jar of leeches. Oh, they have need of prayer, prayer for light to see themselves as God sees them, and intelligence to comprehend themselves as they are comprehended by God, for just as the most beautiful sight in the world is that of a saint, unconscious of sanctity, so the most painful sight in the world is that of a sinner unconscious of his sin. And when they shall have begun to know themselves, there is need of further grace, the grace of strength, that is, resolution to bring themselves to the feet of Christ. For that God should reveal to them the state of their souls is not enough, it was not enough that the strong light of heaven should be flung around St. Paul, or even that he should hear the voice of Christ, it was needful that he should be taken by the hand and led to the feet of God's minister who was appointed to tell him what he should do. So with the soul in sin, it needs the light of God to see its miserable condition, it needs the strength of God to come to the feet of Christ. Once there, there is no need of further exhortation, because, if God only shows it in its own wretchedness and misery, if it sees the leprosy with which sin covers it, it will pray as the leper prayed, pray not in the usual conventional form, but pray with a strong cry to heaven, pray in a manner that can not be refused, for its prayer will do violence to heaven, and compel heaven to yield up its graces.

And for you, too, M. B., who are not conscious of mortal sin, who are sound and whole before God, there is need of prayer, prayer equally fervent, equally earnest. Remember that your salvation is not by any means secure. It is a long way yet to heaven, and

every inch of that way is undermined with pitfalls, is lined with ambuscades, to speak plainly, the state of grace in which you find yourselves at present is no security that you will persevere. Your salvation is yet to be worked out with fear and trembling, and by prayer. Realize this fact; bring home to yourselves this truth, let no false sense of security lull you even for a moment into forgetfulness of your awful responsibility, and your entire dependence upon God. Remember, finally, that wishing is not praying; to desire salvation and to hope for salvation are the causes of prayer and one of the reasons why we pray. But they are not prayer, prayer is asking God for that which we desire, and it is not to those who wish, but to those who ask, that God's graces are given.

Pray, therefore, M. B., fervently, earnestly, as those who feel the awfulness of their salvation. Pray for yourselves, for Christian charity is partly selfish. Pray for others, for Christian charity does not exclude sympathy with others. Pray for the church for the Holy See, for Christ's Vicar. Pray for your friends, who are living, pray for your dead friends. Pray to God that instead of punishing sinners in hell, He may rather withdraw them from sin and bring them to Himself, that having tasted and seen how bitter the world is, they may now taste and feel how sweet is the Lord.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

HOPE AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR DEVINE.

"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"—Matt. viii. 26.

SYNOPSIS.—*Jesus calms the storm on the sea of Galilee and teaches by the miracle and by His words a lesson of hope and confidence in God.*

I. The nature and qualities of Christian hope. 1. The virtue defined. Its object. When infused into the soul. Described by St. Francis de Sales. Its position with faith and charity in regard to the supernatural life of the soul. 2. Its qualities. It must be firm and certain on the part of God. It must be universal in its regard to all things necessary for salvation and extend to all time.

II. The necessity of hope and its effects. 1. Grace requires hope, therefore it must exist in the souls of all the just. All bound to make acts of this virtue. Its necessity shown by texts of Holy Scripture and

from our Lord's miracles. 2. Effects of this virtue. St. Francis speaks of the love that springs from hope. It brings a calm and rest to the soul. It makes a man understand how the things of this life may be used properly and directed towards life eternal.

Exhortation.—Greater attention should be bestowed upon the exercise of the theological virtues. The virtue of hope ought not to be neglected. We need it so much, especially in the time of trials and dangers. It should be exercised frequently, especially during prayer—during life and at the hour of death, always resting our hope on the morals of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

The event narrated in this day's gospel happened probably in the month of March, toward the end of the first year of our Lord's public ministry. St. Mark tells us that it was in the evening of a certain day, probably that day on which He began to teach the people in parables. The crowd listened to His words all day and, attracted by His teaching, they lingered on till evening, when our Saviour at length decided to escape to the secluded loneliness of the eastern side of the lake of Genesareth or the sea of Galilee. He then entered a ship. This, we are told, was the boat which usually waited on His movements, the one which had belonged to Peter, it is supposed. St. Mark mentions that there were also with him other little ships. The lake was calm when they set out to cross it, but the suddenness and violence of the "hurricane" which soon swept over it is quite in accordance with what is known of this lake.

Then our Saviour's sleep is mentioned. He was in the hinder part of the ship sleeping on a pillow, as St. Mark tells us. Sleep, fatigue, hunger and the like were natural to Christ, but always under His control. And we may well understand the need He had of sleep on that particular occasion after all He had been doing during the day. In the midst of the storm the disciples came to Him, saying: "Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising, he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm." It is to the words addressed by our Saviour to the disciples on this occasion that I wish to direct special attention: "O ye of little faith." The disciples had some faith, but not as yet very perfect or strong. As they had undertaken that voyage at His command, they should have felt secure under His care; *sleeping or waking* He could assist them. In seeking His aid, however, they showed some faith, though not as strong and perfect as it should have been. Had they reflected well that God was with them, that no storm would harm them while trusting to His providence, they would not have feared.

The faith here referred to, according to all interpreters, is to be understood as hope or confidence in God: and we may understand the moral lesson taught by our Saviour and set down in the Gospel by the Evangelist as directly intended to teach us to place our confidence in God and to cherish in our souls the virtue of hope, which is the second of the theological virtues. In order to renew the acts of the virtue frequently and to attach due importance to it in our Christian lives, let us consider, 1st. The nature and qualities of Christian hope; 2d. Its necessity and its effects.

I. *The Nature and Qualities of Hope.*—The virtue of hope “is a supernatural gift of God by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and all the means necessary to obtain it if we do what He requires of us.” It has for its object God as the supreme good to be possessed by us hereafter, or, in other words, eternal beatitude; and, also, the means necessary for obtaining that beatitude, namely, grace and the virtues that accompany grace. The motives of hope are the infinite goodness of God toward us, His omnipotence, and His fidelity to His promises. This hope is founded on the merits of Christ’s passion and death.

It is one of the theological virtues having God as its immediate object, one of those expressly mentioned by St. Paul when he says: “Now there remain faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (I. Cor. xiii. 13).

This virtue, together with faith and charity, is infused into our souls in baptism, according to the teaching of the Council of Trent. Baptism, it teaches, is the instrumental cause of justification in which grace and the virtues are infused; and furthermore, it teaches that in the act of justification, together with the remission of sins, a man receives at the same time all these virtues, infused simultaneously through Jesus Christ, in whom he is implanted, faith, hope, and charity (I. Con. Trent, Sess. vi. Ch. 7).

The learned and pious St. Francis de Sales well describes this virtue when he gives the distinction between to *hope* and to *aspire*. He says: “We hope for things which it depends on others to bestow, and which we can not procure ourselves; we aspire to those which we can obtain by adopting certain measures. It is chiefly through the grace and mercy of God that we can attain to the enjoyment of His divine majesty, yet He requires that we should correspond with His grace by the feeble cooperation of our consent.

“Hope, by which we repose in God, is mingled with an ardent im-

pulse, by which we bound toward God; it would be defective if we merely hoped without aspiring to the object of our hope, or if we aspired to this divine object without grounding our pretensions on His infinite goodness, by which He promises Himself to us. Whence it is easy to judge that that which holds the first rank is not precisely a movement of aspiration, because the only objects considered are the goodness and the grace of God, which are necessary, not only for aspiring after God, but even for thinking worthily of our sovereign good" (Treatise on the Love of God, pp. 110, 111).

This virtue comes into the whole system of our supernatural life, together with faith and charity. God, in His eternal beatitude, is our final end. The beatific vision of God can not be obtained in this life, and our intellect by the sole light of reason can not know God as He is to be known, nor the means of doing His will; and, on that account, faith is necessary—that faith by which God reveals Himself to us, and teaches us how to serve Him in this life. In like manner our will inclines to God, either as He is the Good by which we can be made perfectly happy, and this motion of the will is by the virtue of hope, or our will inclines to God, as He is the greatest Good in Himself, and for this the virtue of charity is required. By the acts of these virtues we are moved toward God as the final object of our existence; and this can not be done directly by the acts of any other virtues, and therefore it is that the three theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity, are by their very nature the most essential and important, whose acts should be most frequently exercised by every Christian soul.

The Qualities of Hope.—There are two qualities of this virtue to which all others can be reduced: 1. That it be firm or immovable, and 2. That it be universal. With regard to the first of these St. Paul calls hope the anchor of salvation: "That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have the strongest comfort, who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us. Which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm, and which entereth in even within the veil" (Heb. vi. 18, 19).

Hope is founded on the promises of God, and therefore it should be certain and firm, inasmuch as God is faithful to His promises, and by reason of His omnipotence He can execute all that He has promised and all things according to His will. On the part of God our hope should be absolutely certain, but on our part it must always be accompanied by holy fear as to the ultimate result and as to the

manner of our correspondence with and perseverance in grace. "The childlike fear of the Lord," says Bishop Ullathorne, "is the true beginning of hope as well as of wisdom; for in detaching us from trust in ourselves it sets us free to trust in God. It is neither servile, worldly, nor carnal fear, but the reverence of God in the fear of ourselves. . . . The power of the gift of the fear of the Lord is to conquer the fears of creatures, to absorb them and so banish them from the soul, and to restore us to our freedom and dignity because the gift of the fear of the Lord delivers us from every other fear."

The second quality of hope is that it be universal: that is to hope all things and at all times. We should hope for all things, all good things to be obtained from the merciful hands of God: 1. Eternal happiness to be certainly obtained if we persevere in grace, or if grace be lost by sin, hope is not lost unless the sin be one of despair, the sinner may still hope sincerely for repentance and the recovery of grace and restoration to the friendship of God. 2. We should hope for all the means necessary to obtain salvation—these God has promised. And, 3. We should hope and pray for all things necessary both for soul and body. Again we should hope always and at all times, no matter in what condition or state we may find ourselves. The more helpless and miserable we are, the greater should be our hope. In times of dangers and temptations especially you need the aid of this virtue, through which you may rest assured that "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it" (I. Cor. x. 13).

Even the greatest sinners should never despair of the mercy of God, for as long as they live here on earth the means of salvation are available, and God offers them the grace of conversion if they turn to Him in prayer and sorrow of heart.

2. *The Necessity of Hope and its Effects.*—Hope is necessary because grace requires its presence in the soul. Let me remind you, dear brethren, that love always desires the most intimate union with the person beloved, as may be illustrated by cases of individuals and of families. Grace makes a man the friend of God, and His child and heir, and faith teaches that it is possible for us to possess an ineffable union with God which results in eternal bliss, and therefore the desire of this union is infused into the soul. Now, a desire without the hope of obtaining its object would be the torment of the

soul, and therefore God, who imparts His grace to us, bestows upon us at the same time the virtue of hope, as a companion to the virtues of faith and charity. Faith, which makes known to us our supernatural destiny, represents it to us not only as eminently desirable, but also as possible with the aids that God has promised. This leads us to elicit an act of hope. We find in the revelation made by faith the conditions on which our hope must be founded, namely, love—at least initial love of the supreme goodness—and confidence in the power of attaining its enjoyment. In the just the infused habits correspond to the acts which proceed from them, and as all are obliged sometimes to make acts of hope, we can from this also conclude the necessity of this virtue, and that the grace which justifies us must have united with it that holy hope which is the strength and consolation of our exile here on earth. We may, therefore, say with the apostle: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his great mercy, hath regenerated us into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that can not fade, reserved in heaven for you” (I. Peter i. 3, 4).

The necessity of this virtue may also be proved from several places of Holy Scripture. The Psalmist says: “In God is my salvation and my glory: he is the God of my help, and my hope is in God. Trust in him, all ye congregation of people” (Psal. lxi. 8, 9). God will reward abundantly those who hope in Him. “Because he hoped in me I will deliver him” (Ibid. xc. 14). We have seen how often our Saviour attributes His miracles to the faith or confidence of those on whose behalf he performed them. To the centurion He said: “Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee” (Matt. viii. 13). To the blind man of Jericho He said: “Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole” (Mark x. 52). In these places *faith* is to be understood in the sense of hope and trust in the power of God as we understand it in to-day’s Gospel. Finally hope is necessary to the full honor of God, because through it we acknowledge that all comes from God, that we expect all from His bounty, and that He can never fail in His words and promises.

✓ *The Effects of Hope.*—St. Francis de Sales, writing on the love which springs from hope, says: “When faith has drawn aside the veil of ignorance, which concealed the Almighty from our view, it is incredible with what ardor the soul longs to attain a knowledge of the sovereign good which she beholds far distant, and to burst the

bonds of her natural life." She exclaims. "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong, living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?" (Ps. xli. 1, 2). Again he writes: "The promises of God produce a wonderful effect in our souls; they diminish and dispel our uneasiness by strengthening the cause from which it proceeds. This is an undeniable truth. The Almighty, by holding out to us a promise of future happiness, increases our previous desire of enjoying it; and yet, the anxiety attendant on this desire is almost destroyed by the promise. Calm and content are diffused into our hearts by the assurance which God gives them to new desires." This calm and rest of the soul may be appropriately likened to the calm which succeeded the tempest on the Sea of Galilee after our Saviour's command to the winds and the waves: "And there came a great calm." As St. Chrysostom has said: "As a lord commands a handmaid and as a Creator the works of His hands, so did our Saviour calm the sea and chain the waves," and so does He calm the troubles and anxieties of all faithful souls who put their trust in Him. In the words of St. Gregory we may give the following enumeration or explanation of the effects and results of this divine virtue: "The elect numbers his days as those of a hireling; he reaches forward unto his prize, the more confident in hope, the more steadfastly he endures under the increase of toils. He watches the flowing away of this present time; he reckons up his days and his work; he fears that any movement of his lips should glide away without its appointed labor; he rejoices in adversity, he is restored by suffering, he is refreshed by sorrow, because he sees that he shall more largely be repaid by the rewards of the life to come, the more truly he renders himself up, for the love thereof, unto a daily death" (Apud Benedict XIV., "On Heroic Virtue," English edition, vol. i., p. 95).

Dear brethren, I have dwelt upon this virtue to-day and endeavored to explain it for the purpose of directing your attention to the theological virtues, as they are the soul of the supernatural life, and on them primarily and directly depends the meritoriousness of all acts of virtue, and they contain the beginnings of eternal life and the participation in or conformation to divine life. Your special attention has been directed to the virtue of hope, that this virtue may not be forgotten or its acts neglected. We hear much from time to time of the other virtues—of faith and charity, and of the

moral virtues, such as patience, humility, obedience, etc., but I would ask you to examine yourselves frequently upon the manner in which you exercise this virtue and its acts. I fear it is a very common failing amongst Christians to distrust the providence of God and to neglect having recourse to that providence as it behooves them. When things prosper with people they attribute the success to themselves and to their own efforts; when things are adverse and when want and suffering fall to their lot, then they lose all hope and confidence, at the time when the words of our Blessed Redeemer would remind them of their duty: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" On certain occasions some Christians lose heart and courage and give way to their miseries and sink under their afflictions through forgetfulness of this virtue that God has infused into their souls. Let it then influence our lives, and let it influence our prayers, and especially that one daily prayer taught us by our Saviour Himself—the Lord's Prayer. By which we beg of Him our daily bread as from a Father; by which also we beg that His kingdom may come; for the pardon of our sins; for strength to resist temptations; for deliverance from all evil. God wishes us to ask for all these things, and He will infallibly grant our petitions if our prayers be with proper hope and confidence. Hope then without hesitation or doubt. Hope in whatever state you may be in; hope in life and in death; rest your hope on Jesus Christ our Saviour and be assured you will never be confounded.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

RUN, THAT YOU MAY OBTAIN.

BY DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B., B.A. (OXON).

"So run that you may obtain."—I. Cor. ix. 24.

SYNOPSIS.—Corinth, luxurious and immoral, its converts needed specially the lessons of Christian asceticism—the metaphor taken from the Isthmian games—familiar to modern Christians—"Run as if only one could win,"—we are running against time—Atalanta's apple and its moral—the boxing-match—the means of victory—mortification unpopular nowadays—despised and neglected—yet the teaching of Christ and His Apostles remains unchanged—the example of the saints—Blessed Thomas More—the folly of neglecting it—Lent approaching—we are warned to prepare—what can we do?—practical suggestions—the exceeding great reward.

Introduction.—The great apostle of the Gentiles was writing to his Corinthian converts. Corinth was then a by-word even among

the heathen for luxury and profligacy, to become Corinthianized a synonym for being morally corrupted.

"The Orient," says Fouard, "brought thither its perverse and shameful passions, Rome its pitiless brutality and bloody sports." The temple of Venus, with its thousand priestesses, was a source of moral degradation unequalled in the black annals of pagan vice. To newly-converted Christians living among such a population, familiarized from childhood with such unspeakable sights and associations, it was necessary above all to preach self-restraint, bodily mortification, and austere penance. Only thus could they preserve themselves from the contagion of vicious example, only thus could they hope to keep themselves unspotted from the world. Many of them had been snatched out of the fire, brands plucked from the burning, as the apostle reminds them—they had been "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, shamefully effeminate, unclean, thieves, misers, drunkards, railers, spoilers of others' goods" (I. Cor. vi. 9, 11), and if they were to remain true to the pure and lofty tenets of their new faith, they must learn thus early to "chastise their bodies and bring them into subjection."

And in order to bring the lesson home to them with fullest possible force, the great apostle uses an illustration which was familiar to them all. At Corinth were held every second year the famous Isthmian games, in which athletes from the whole Roman empire contended for the mastery. He reminds them of the training to which those young men voluntarily subjected themselves in order that they might gain the prize and the glory it brought with it. And yet this prize so eagerly sought after was but a crown of parsley!

"Do you not know," he says, "that those who run in the stadium (or race course) all run, but only one gains the prize? So run, that you may obtain! And every man who striveth in the contest abstains from all things: but they do it that they may gain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."

The metaphor so familiar to the Corinthians is not less so to ourselves. It appeals to the modern Englishman or American, with his devotion to athletics, as forcibly as to the ancient Greek. Many of us have known by experience the discipline imposed on those who are training for a race, and there are few young men among us to whom the words of Epictetus will not go home: "Would you be a victor in the Olympic games? So indeed would I, for it is a glorious thing; but consider what must precede—and follow, and

so enter on the contest. You must live by rule, on spare diet, without delicacies, take exercise at the appointed hour, in heat and in cold, and abstain from wine and cold drinks; in short, you must obey the trainer as you do your physician."

1. It was natural, then, that St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians should apply so familiar an illustration to the Christian life, in order to enforce on his converts the need of self-discipline. He bids them go back in memory to the exciting days of the games, to see the runners, stripped of their flowing clothes, running with nerves alert, muscles on the stretch, loins girt, bodies glistening with oil, eyes fixed on the goal—the one purpose absorbing all other thoughts—to get there first and win the longed-for crown. Only one could win it, and therefore each must strive his hardest. Only one, and yet it was so ardently desired by all! And then he turns with a rapid transition to his hearers—"So run, that you may win"—"So run"—run, that is, not less earnestly or with less effort than if the crown was reserved for only one of you. Run! with the one purpose before you, with eyes fixed on the heavenly goal, not looking aside to the right hand or the left, still less glancing back, for that would be fatal. Run! stripped of those clinging garments of old habits and sensual indulgence, of earthly attachments and worldly desires, run, with your loins girded, with your whole souls intent on the prize, so run that you may obtain!

Yes, as if only one of you could win it! For so it really is. We are not running in this race one against the other, but each of us is engaged in a match against time. It is a feat of endurance that is demanded of us, a contest in which a moment's repose may be fatal. There must be no turning aside for rest and refreshment; if we have not reached the goal when the bell rings for us, we shall never reach it at all.

"I therefore so run not as uncertainly," continues the saint. That is to say, I run, not wandering about the course, zigzag from side to side, but straight as an arrow from the bow, with eyes fixed steadily on the goal.

The well-known fable of Atalanta's apple may well have been in the apostle's mind. The matchless maid whose speed could be equaled by no mortal competitor, lost the race through turning aside to pick up the golden apple cunningly thrown in her way.

However this may be, the fable strikingly brings home the moral which St. Paul is here enforcing: "Beware, as I do," he seems to say,

“beware of turning aside after the alluring pleasures of this world, those glittering baits which the devil is ever throwing on your path. Let them not entice you from your end, that goal to which you should be speeding, that crown which is laid up for you there. If I myself can not afford to despise these precautions, can you safely do so?”

2. And then he turns to another well-known feature of the national sports—the boxing match. “So fight I,” he cries, “not as one that beateth the air.” Remember you have to engage in a hand to hand conflict with a powerful and cunning antagonist, one who is an expert in fighting, who is quick, resourceful, strong beyond all human possibility. Remember that this fight is no mimic contest, but one on which the issues of life and death depend. Our foe is a deadly one, he has craft, experience, and force on his side, and if we neglect any means of winning, we shall most surely be overcome. We must waste no blows on the air. Each must be aimed deliberately and struck home.

3. If, then, we are engaged in this race, in this contest, how are we to insure victory? St. Paul goes on to tell us. After the grace of God and the sacraments, which are its principal channels, there are no means so powerful and so sure as those which he recommends. “Every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things.” “I chastise my body and bring it into subjection” (I. Cor. ix. 25, 27).

The means, in a word, are self-discipline, mortification.

My brethren, these are not popular means, especially in these degenerate days. The world has done its best to teach us to despise asceticism as the morbid product of medieval monasticism, and the many forms of heresy which surround us agree only in this, that they flout the very idea of mortification or self-denial. Even Catholics have too often become impregnated with this fatal error. As Lent approaches it becomes their preoccupation to discover a plausible pretext for getting dispensed, or for dispensing themselves, from the Church's law of fasting and abstinence.

The sterner side of Christian teaching is abhorrent to these “easy-chair Catholics.” If they can not reach heaven on a feather-bed, they are not sure whether it is worth the trouble of reaching at all. Fasting seems to have almost disappeared, except from the cloister, and even good Catholics think that they are keeping an exemplary Lent if they abstain twice in the week instead of only once, as at other times.

As to those austere instruments of Christian penance, the discipline, the hair shirt, and the like, they have almost disappeared. They are, indeed, all but forgotten, or if perchance they are mentioned it is with a sneer and a smile of pity or with the shudder of intolerable disgust. They were once the weapons of Christian perfection, they have become the symbols of an irrational fanaticism.

To the thoughtful observer there are few signs of the times more deplorable than this almost universal self-indulgence, this cowardice which, while it shrinks in horror from the cross, seeks to disguise itself under the specious liveries of enlightenment, this shallow, ungenerous levity which would eliminate penance from the teaching of the crucified.

And surely there is no delusion more fatal or more unchristian. The words of our blessed Lord remain unchanged: "Except ye do penance ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 5). "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. xvi. 24). He has made no new conditions for our age, and if we reject His teaching it must be at our own peril.

4. And here we find the apostle driving home to the hearts and consciences of his converts the same solemn warning. His words could not well be stronger. The force of the original Greek would seem to be: "I bruise my body and make a slave of it."

And it is thus the saints have ever understood him. "If we do not treat our bodies thus," they said, "the flesh will become our master, and then we are lost." It was this thought that drove the angelic Aloysius from his soft bed and kept him kneeling on the stones, upright and motionless, for hour upon hour, of the cold night. This was the impulse which made the noble boy Benedict of Nursia strip himself of his clothing and roll himself naked among the thorns of Subiaco. This truth inspired virgins like the seraphic St. Teresa and sweet St. Rose of Lima to inflict on their innocent bodies torments from which strong men would have shrunk, and it drove saints like Antony, Jerome, and Bruno out into the desert to live among wild beasts. Fired by this thought Francis of Assisi flung himself into the snowdrifts. Patrick and Wilfrid and a host of others stood for long hours, plunged in icy water. Elizabeth, a tenderly nurtured queen, bared her back to the scourge, Bernard and Catharine of Siena, and thousands like them, denied themselves all pleasant food, to fast on bread and water.

It is indeed a universal law. Never will you find a canonized

saint who has not thus afflicted his body and brought it into subjection. The gentle St. Francis of Sales was wont to discipline himself to blood; the more modern saints have rivaled in holy emulation the penances of the more ancient, and in vain will the cowardly and self-indulgent Christian of our day search for a heavenly patron under whose example he may shelter himself. Let us take yet one striking instance. Who among the noble army of martyrs is so modern in every sense of the word as blessed Thomas More? A man of the world, a learned and acute lawyer, the favorite of kings and princes, a witty writer and conversationalist, an accomplished courtier, a devoted father and husband, where will you find the secret which made him abandon all things, resign his lofty position as Lord High Chancellor of England, tear himself away from the embraces of his loved ones, quit the noble house he had built for himself, and, in exchange for all the world holds dear, embrace suffering, imprisonment, and a cruel death? "It was his faith," you say; but how did he keep that faith so bright?

"It was his love of God." But how did he learn to prefer that love to all the ties of earth?

See him sitting one day in his garden by the river side, gaily chatting and laughing with his loved ones. The heat of the weather has made him lay his gown aside, and an unguarded movement exposes to view a glimpse of the rough hair shirt which he ever wears under his velvet doublet. A light-hearted daughter, whose quick eyes have espied it, laughs at the sight. But, my brethren, be sure that the angels revered it. For it was by thus disciplining the flesh by the hidden shirt of hair and frequent scourging, even from the days of youth, that the Lord High Chancellor of England learned to keep his body in subjection, to wean his heart from all the joys of earth, and thus prepare himself when the day of trial came to embrace his Master's cross and gain the martyr's palm.

4. In a word, the lives of all the saints teach us the lesson that St. Paul lays down to-day. It would be as foolish for us to say we could do without bodily mortification as for a modern athlete to despise training. That is as necessary now for him as it was for his forerunners at the Isthmian Games; the asceticism which was practised by the saints can not be altogether neglected now without most grievous peril to our souls. Just as it would have been utterly useless to go to the stadium without the preliminary training, so it is useless for us to engage in our life's contest if we do not train the

body—if we allow the muscles of our souls to get soft and slack by self-indulgence.

It is useless for us to think that we can confine ourselves to restraining the unlawful cravings of the flesh; for if we habitually yield to the flesh in all that is not manifestly sinful, we shall find ourselves so weakened that, sooner or later, when a fierce assault is made, our defenses will give way and we shall shamefully yield. We must accustom ourselves not to give our bodies all they crave for as regards food, sleep, and the like, lest before we know it we find we have sold ourselves into a miserable slavery, and that we can refuse our tyrant nothing.

5. The holy season of Lent is now fast approaching. The purple vestments of priest and altar warn us of its coming and bid us prepare ourselves to keep it worthily. We are urged to give ourselves to works of penance:

“And while the sword in Mary’s breast
Is driven home, we hide,
Each in our hearts, and count the wounds
Of passion and of pride.”

Let us make this holy season a real time of training. It has been provided by the wisdom of holy Mother Church for this very object. Now, if ever, are we to set ourselves in real earnest to follow the apostolic example, “to chastise our bodies and bring them into subjection.”

But we are so cowardly, so ungenerous, that we are apt to make our very weakness an excuse for doing nothing. The example of the saints is too high for us, the very thought of their austerities frightens us, and we so easily persuade ourselves that it is all beyond our strength.

And, indeed, there can be no doubt that we are, most of us, at present incapable of following very closely in their footsteps. Nor does God ask it of us now. It was His grace alone which gave strength to those glorious servants of His in their ceaseless unrelenting battle against their own flesh.

He asks of us in general only some light and easy mortifications, penances that will not injure our healths, or prevent us doing the work that He has given us to do. But He does ask, and He does expect, that each of us should, in the sanctuary of his own heart, examine himself as to what he can and ought to bear, what he can

and ought to give up. Each soul must resolve on the sacrifices which God inspires it to make, and even then carry them out only after consultation with a prudent confessor.

But the general laws of the Church, the fasting and abstinence rendered so easy by multiplied dispensations, surely there should be few who need excuse from them! And if our occupations or our weakness do render the fasting impossible (and we should beware of too easily assuming this without due trial and experience), let us be careful not to dispense ourselves, but to ask of God's representatives to prescribe in its place some other mortifications which are not beyond our strength.

How many Catholics there are who come to confession at Easter and calmly tell their confessors that on their own authority they have not fasted all Lent, and then think that they have put all right again. How deplorable is this levity in dealing with the Church's sacred laws. We can all of us resolve to mortify our bodies in ways that will not injure, but rather improve our health. Let us resolve this Lent to mortify our sloth, either by rising earlier than our usual hour in order to gain a few minutes extra for prayer, or at least by rising promptly at the appointed time. Cardinal Newman once said that promptness in rising was a notable sign of perfection, and in this he was but echoing the witness of all spiritual writers. Nothing so weakens our moral fiber as those few minutes or needless self-indulgence at the beginning of the day. The first-fruits of our day belong to God, and He should not be defrauded of His rights. If we can thus get time to assist at daily Mass, we shall thereby give God glory and gain infinite benefits for our own souls. How many of us need to take to heart St. Philip's solemn words: "In order to begin the day well and to end it better, it is necessary to hear Mass *every day*."

Again, even if we can not fast, in how many ways can we not mortify our taste? We may abstain altogether from some favorite dish, or what is perhaps even harder, only take a small portion of what we like best. Again a man may give up smoking, a woman some other favorite indulgence. If we made the resolution that whenever we sat down to a meal we would mortify our taste in some little thing, we should make great progress in Christian asceticism. Again, we may most profitably mortify our curiosity. How much time we waste over profitless, if not harmful, reading—news-papers, novels, and magazines! What, if some of this time were

regularly devoted to the reading of some spiritual book? Time, too, that would otherwise be spent in useless reading or amusement could be profitably devoted to some work of charity, to make garments for poor children and the like. The tongue might well be mortified to our own great profit and that of our neighbor also. A certain time given to silence and retirement instead of to vain gossip and idle conversation would be very pleasing to God. In a hundred other ways, which will easily suggest themselves to any devout and earnest soul, we may make this holy time a season of spiritual profit, a very harvest-time of merit.

“Grace is very plentiful in Lent,” says Father Faber; how happy shall we be if we make use of the divine riches thus laid so abundantly at our disposal!

6. Those athletes of old, as St. Paul reminds us, toiled and suffered so much to gain a corruptible crown—a mere wreath of parsley or bay, which quickly faded. “But we are incorruptible.” Ah, let the thought of that crown in heaven spur us on to renewed efforts, to unceasing struggles! It is reserved for you and me. Christ our King is waiting at the goal to crown us, amid the plaudits of that great crowd of witnesses, the blessed saints and angels, who are witnessing the contest with such breathless and eager anxiety.

The applause of the spectators at the Isthmian Games rang like music in the ears of the glad winners. What will be to us the sweetness of the joyous congratulations of the hosts of the blessed, nay of those wondrous words of welcome with which the King Himself shall greet us: “Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!” “So run that you may obtain.”

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

HAPPINESS IN THE MIDST OF SORROW.

BY THE RT. REV. RAPHAEL MOSS, O.P.

"Gladly will I glory in my infirmities."

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—All desire happiness. Why more do not seek it in religion.—Our happiness, fulfilled in glory, foreshadowed in grace. *The Sacraments fountains of happiness:* (1) Their supernatural character. (2) Helps in temptation. (3) Give taste for spiritual things. (4) Bring God to our soul and keep Him there. (5) Each Sacrament has its special joy. (6) Joy of confession and communion. *Conclusion.*—*Exhortation to receiving these Sacraments.* Joy of Christian life.

If there is one thing upon earth upon which all men are agreed, it is in the search after happiness. Everybody desires happiness, everybody spends his life in the effort to attain it. We may, and indeed do, differ greatly as to the means, but the end is always one and the same—happiness. Now we sometimes hear it said, especially by religious people, that happiness is not to be found on earth, and that this world is a vale of tears. In a sense this is true, of course, but there is also a sense in which it is false, and many a poor soul is discouraged and disheartened at the outset and turns away from the service of God and the practice of religion, because he is led to believe it a dismal, wearisome task, and he wanders away to seek elsewhere the happiness for which his heart was made, and for which it is thirsting. A foolish, and oftentimes a fatal mistake, and one which is entirely our own fault. The service of God is not meant to be dreary, it is not meant to be galling. The inspired writer bids us taste and see that the Lord is sweet, and our blessed Saviour Himself tells us that His yoke is sweet, and His burden light. If, then, we speak of this world as a vale of tears, it is because we stay our eyes on the thorns and briars, the sorrows and disappointments of life—it is because we look at only one side of the picture. We must look further and we shall hear the voice of our faith and reason telling us that we were created for happiness, real, solid happiness, in this world as in the next, and since we can not possibly desire anything else, we must realize that there must be some way of attaining

this happiness. Now what is this way? We are told that God has made His dwelling-place in light, unapproachable light, and when in His goodness He allows such of His creatures as have been found worthy to see Him face to face, we are told that they are made like unto Him, because they see Him as He is. This likeness to God is made perfect by the light of glory which shines upon them, but here in this life we have in its place the light of grace, and by it we are made like to God in some faint and far-off way. And even as the full vision of His glory and the perfection of our likeness to Him constitute our eternal happiness, so also all the real happiness of this world must be founded upon our nearness to our Maker and the fulness of the light of grace—in other words, our happiness is proportioned to our grace. This being the case, it is not astonishing that, when Our Lord came on earth to die for us, and to help us to fulfil our end, and so attain eternal happiness, His great love should have prompted Him to leave in His Church most abundant means of obtaining grace—the bond of this union with Him. And our faith tells us that He did this. He instituted seven sacraments, and He left them to His Church for the benefit of His followers until the end of time. It follows then, dear brethren, that the sacraments are the great fountains of this happiness after which our nature craves, for if, as we have said, sin is the only real sorrow, and the cause of all sorrow, it must follow that the means of avoiding sin, and keeping ourselves in the grace of God, must be the most effectual means of obtaining that happiness which our souls desire. And it is because the Church understands this so well that she lays a special command on all her children at this time, obliging them, under pain of grievous sin, to make use of the two sacraments which we need the most, and the real meaning of this command of the Church is that we should receive these two sacraments as often as we possibly can.

Let us, therefore, try to look at the matter from this point of view and do our best to realize this (1) most beautiful work of the sacraments—their power to increase our happiness. First of all then we must see that the sacraments are necessarily most wonderful fountains of joy to man, because of their supernatural and miraculous character. They are something belonging to this world, and yet they are above it. We see and we handle the water, the oil, or the bread, or whatever the matter of the sacraments may be. We hear the simple words and we know by faith that whenever the two come

together there is a wonderful outpouring of grace, more wonderful than the creation of the world. The sacraments, therefore, speak to us in a most special way of God and His dealings with us. They are meant to bring home to our minds the truths that our lower nature would overlook. They remind us of our eternal destiny. They speak to us of all that we have lost—and all that the Son of God has done to win it back for us. St. Paul tells us that God is rich in mercy, i. e., that He is abounding in mercy, and nowhere is this shown more clearly than in the sacraments. It was not enough for Him to pour out His blood for us—He must invent many ways of applying that blood to our hearts—He must invent a means of renewing His all atoning sacrifice—He must find out a plan by which He may die daily and yet live forever amongst us—the sinful children of men.

2. Then again the sacraments are a source of happiness to us, because they are such wonderful helps to us in temptation. We said just now that sin was the only evil, the only sorrow to be dreaded, and because temptation is the approach of sin, the attack and close struggle in which the soul and her deadly enemy strive for the mastery, therefore it is that our hearts quail at temptation, even as the weak lambs tremble in the sheepfold when they hear the cry of the wolf in the outside darkness of the night; moreover, we lose heart and get tired of a warfare which is so incessant and so long. What then must be our refuge in the time of temptation? Where can we find the armor that will protect us from these fiery darts, the oil to anoint and strengthen our limbs, the food that will nourish us and send the blood through our veins with renewed force and life? In the holy sacraments. For every new peril that meets us, as well as for the daily struggles that go to make life what it is, Jesus Christ has provided abundant helps—Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, and Holy Eucharist, Orders, Matrimony, and the Last Anointing. What are they but so many inventions of God's love for us, so many fulfilments of His tender promise—made by the lips of the prophet of old: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee and called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou shalt pass through the waters I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not cover thee. When thou shalt walk in the fire thou shalt not be burnt, and the flames shall not burn in thee" (Is. xliii. 1).

3. But temptations are doubly strong when they are helped by our corrupt nature. The freedom of our will is a citadel, if you like, into

which no outside enemy can enter, but the strongest walls are weak indeed when there is a traitor behind them; and that is just our case. Ever since the fall of our first parents, the will of man, once so strong, so noble, and so free, is now weak and timid and depraved. Created for the better things, it allows itself to rest among the lower; longing for truth and beauty and goodness, it tries to satisfy itself with the husks of swine, and hence it is that temptation can nearly always rely on help from within. What must we do to stop this? "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of the Father. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 1, 2). Mind the things that are above, or more literally, have a taste for the things that are above. We must then change our tastes, if they are depraved. If they have fallen low we must elevate them. And the sacraments will help us to do this. They will heal us of the sickness that makes the sweetest food taste bitter, they will cool this burning fever that our passions have enkindled. "Mind the things that are above." But how shall we find the things that are from above—how discern them from the things of earth? True God has spoken to our hearts. He has formed us to His own image and likeness, and bade us cling to Him, because He is our Reward exceeding great, but we have forgotten all that long ago. We have turned our backs on Him by repeated sin and wandered into a far country. How can we find a pathway which will lead us safely back? How keep to it amid the many byways? "If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23). There is the answer to it all: "No matter how far a man may have wandered, no matter how low he may have fallen—if he love Me, and love not in word only, but in deed and in truth, my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him."

And how does God dwell in the soul? How does He make it His abode? Is it not by His grace, that beautiful and wonderful gift, which raises us to a state above our nature, and makes our souls the dwelling-place, the temple of God—the Holy of Holies? And grace is given in the sacraments, and given without fail—full measure and flowing over, if we place no obstacle in the way. When Ezechias the king was sick unto death, God sent His prophet to comfort him with the promise of his speedy recovery: "Thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father: Behold, I have healed thee, and on the

third day thou shalt go up to the temple of the Lord. And the king said: What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me? And Isaias, the prophet, called upon the Lord for a sign, and behold, the shadow on the dial crept back ten degrees, and the king knew that his prayer was heard." And what are the sacraments but the outward signs of the wonderful work of grace in the soul? They give us, therefore, the grace which brings us back to God, and they do more—they help us to keep with God. It is not enough to return to Him, we must stay with Him. We must abide with Him to the end. He only that persevereth to the end shall be saved. And it is in the sacraments that we get the help to persevere. We read how the great prophet Elias, flying from the anger of a wicked queen, lay down tired and faint in the shadow of a tree, and how an angel of God appeared to him and brought him food. And being strengthened and nourished by that food, he was able to walk forty days and forty nights, even to the mountain of God. So we also, dear brethren, shunning the dangers of this world and its ruler sin, shall find in the sacraments the strength and courage necessary to pass the desert of this life and attain to the real mountain of God—eternal happiness.

And after all this is only reasonable and natural. God is our Creator and last end. He made us for Himself alone, and religion is the path which leads us to Him. It is man striving to do his duty and so serve God and attain to God. It is God stooping down to man and helping him to succeed. It is the union of God and man, and all this is perfectly done by the sacraments, which bind all the duties of man into a small compass, making them simple and evident, and rendering easy and sweet the yoke already so sweet and light of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

5. And lastly, just as each holy sacrament has its own peculiar sign, its own peculiar effect, its own peculiar grace, so has each its own peculiar and special joy. It would take too long to examine each one in detail, but let us take the two that enter most into our daily lives, the two that the Church obliges us to receive at this time—the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

First, then, there is the Sacrament of Penance—the joy of confession! Is such a thing possible? Sorrow, humiliation, shame, regret—these we can understand, but joy—is there room for joy? Yes, dear brethren, and I am sure your own hearts have felt it often enough, whether it be the deep, unspeakable joy of a good confession after years of sin, or the quiet, lasting joy of frequent con-

fession. And it is a wonderful and special joy, springing from the relationship between the soul and God in the Sacrament of Penance. We feel that we are sons kneeling at the feet of our Heavenly Father. We realize at that moment more than ever that we have received the adoption of sons, giving us the right to cry *Abba*—Father. Confession is the literal realization of that most beautiful story that fell from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself (and which was read in the Gospel only yesterday), the history of the Prodigal Son. I will arise, said that poor wanderer. I will arise and go to my Father, not to my King, my Judge, my Master—to my Father. How often have we had to feel the truth of those words—I will arise and go to my Father—and say to Him: Father, I have sinned. And then what was his father's greeting? He fell upon his neck and kissed him, and all was forgiven and forgotten.

And then the Holy Communion. It has a joy above all other joys—a joy so great that we can hardly put it in words. It is the joy of children with a father, and it is more. I will not now call you servants, but friends, said Our Lord, and the joy of the Communion, the happiness of this most blessed sacrament, is the joy, the happiness, that a friend finds in the company of his best beloved friend. Oh, the wonder of it all! Jesus Christ, the holy, spotless Lamb of God, takes by the hand and presses to His Sacred Heart a creature vile with the leprosy of a thousand sins. Nay He does more. Never was love of friends like unto His. He hides Himself under the veils of the Blessed Sacrament, and He comes into our hearts and makes Himself one with us. Oh, my dear, dear brethren, if these things are so—and we know that they are so—how comes it that our hearts are so cold and indifferent? Why was it ever necessary to make a law commanding us to receive the sacraments at least once a year, and how is it that in spite of this law there are many who refuse to come? We are the children of Jesus Christ, members of His one true Church, the little ones of His House, to whom have been revealed all these wonders that are hid from the wise and prudent of this world. Ah, how bright is our lot, if we only do our duty, compared with that of many around us, many who, dear to us though they may be, and worthy of our affection and our esteem, and are yet ignorant of the sweetness of God's best gifts. Their joys and their happiness may *seem* real enough, but they are not sure or lasting, because they are built upon the sand. But our foundation is the rock of God Himself, and when sorrow and

troubles are around us, we can truly say with David: "Why art thou sad, my soul, and why dost thou disquiet me? I will go up into the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth." There He will "make us hear of joy and gladness." He will "restore to us the joy of His salvation," and "believing in Him, though we see Him not, we rejoice with a joy that is unspeakable."

You shall draw water with joy out of the Saviour's fountains. The sacraments are these fountains of joy, and their flood is inexhaustible in life and in death. The saddest life is brightened by their riches, and even the darkness of the Valley of the Shadow of Death yields to their light. And even after death they bear fruit, for their work is eternal, and the happiness that they give us in this world is continued in the next, when the redeemed of the Lord shall come into Sion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

THE GREATNESS OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

"And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."
—I. Cor. xiii. 3.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *The excellency of Christian Charity:* (1) *Alms-giving is nothing without charity.* (2) *Martyrdom is nothing without charity.* II. *The qualities of Christian Charity:* (1) *Charity is patient under injuries.* (2) *Charity is kind and does good to all.* (3) *Charity does not envy another's good fortune.* (4) *Charity is not proud of its good works.* *Are we proud, are we passionate, are we envious?*

What virtue, brethren, in the whole of the Gospels, is inculcated so often, or illustrated by more touching examples, than that of true Christian charity, of Christian love? It forms the theme of St. Paul in this morning's Epistle, and let us listen to him, and study closely the many excellencies of this great virtue, what its nature is, and whether or not it is rooted in our souls. Charity is a supernatural virtue, by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves, for God's sake. The obligation of loving God is grounded on very many reasons, but principally upon His infinite goodness in Himself and on the fact that He has

commanded us to love Him. In our love for our fellow man we have two special rules to follow, namely, we must love him as we love ourselves, we must love him as Christ loved us. Herein are comprised the two great commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the first commandment, and the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark xii. 30, 31). "On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets" (Matt. xxii. 40). Well then might St. Augustine say: "By one and the same charity we love God and our neighbor: God, indeed, for His own sake, and our neighbor for God's sake" (On the Trinity, Book 8, Cap. 8).

I. 1. The Apostle Paul wishes to make us understand the excellency of charity, by comparing it with many things which men esteem as good and holy works. "If," he says, "I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." The feeding and clothing of the poor is one of the chief duties of Christianity. The Gospels have many commands regarding it, and promise many rewards which should encourage us to it. The rich are charged with the care of the poor, and are bound as far as they can to help them in trials resulting from poverty, sickness, nakedness, and want. St. Paul warns the faithful to supply the wants of the poor out of their own abundance (II. Cor. viii. 14). "He that giveth to the poor shall not want" (Prov. xxviii. 27). Christ at the moment of Judgment will invite the blessed to heaven, saying: "I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; naked and you covered me; sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me" (Matt. xxv. 35, 36). "Then will he tell the blessed that as often as they did these things to their fellow creatures, the least of Christ's brethren, he took them as done to himself" (Matt. xxv. 37).

But let us understand this rightly. Many there are who help the poor and afflicted, but they do so through mere good nature, through a selfish dislike of seeing sufferings; through pride, or to gain men's esteem; through mere human sympathy, and for other such like reasons, in which the love of God and mankind have no concern whatever. And though men will have a natural reward for such acts as these, yet still they will not receive a heavenly reward. For

charity must be the mainspring, the moving cause underlying such actions, and it must run through them as the blood does through the human body; it must enter into them, give them life, and be, so to speak, their soul and animation. This will put grace and merit into what otherwise would be mere external works; and it will make them worthy of God's acceptance, and earn for us a heavenly reward. Remark also that St. Paul speaks here, not as one giving a little of his goods, but all; not as one willing them to the poor after his death, when no use to him, but as one giving them all whilst he still lives. Here once more he shows that such actions must spring from grace, must be done for the glory of God and the love of mankind, otherwise they will profit us nothing.

2. But St. Paul goes on and says: "And if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Here he shows that the sufferings that accompany martyrdom are nothing unless undergone through a spirit of charity or for the glory of God and love of mankind. Martyrdom is surely the highest proof that one can give of their sincerity. For life is very precious to men, and most men will rather give up all they have than lose their lives, for they prize life above all earthly price. Yet still, martyrdom may be endured from a mere spirit of philosophic pride and a sheer contempt of pain. But, if a man were to go so far as to deliver up his body to be burned, for any cause, and be not led to do so by the love of God and man, to obey the one and benefit the other, it will profit him nothing. The burning of the body will not supply for, nor take the place of charity, nor will our Maker accept it as a substitute for such. With what propriety then does the apostle speak when he will not allow the mere outward form of giving and suffering to take the place of the interior motive or grace, which must permeate, give life to and render meritorious these lifeless works. Perfection requires a true internal spirit and a motive of religion, which motive is the soul of the outward action, and hence what gives life and merit to these works is the motive, the end, the intention for which they are done, and this end, intention, or motive, must be charity. To do them, through fancy, humor, inclination, interest, or ostentation, is not doing them for God, neither will He accept them when done in such a manner. They are then dead, lifeless things, like the corpse, from which the soul has departed. How careful then must we look to our motives and intentions, lest all our works are ruined, and at the end of life Christ

say to us: "Amen, I say to you, you have received your reward" (Matt. vi. 5).

II. 1. Now in order to thoroughly understand the nature of Charity, with a view to its continual practice, let us study some of its great qualities or properties, which the apostle here mentions. "Charity," he says, "is patient." It is a virtue which makes men control their temper when injured by others. This grace is absolutely required in our intercourse with our fellow men. For some are of such a fierce, hasty temperament that they are inflamed with anger on the slightest occasion, and are the source of much trouble, both to themselves and others. Nay, there are many so hasty that they take offense where none is meant or offered, and fancy themselves insulted when others never dream of hurting them. Callous toward others, they are most tender to themselves, and feel hurt and injured when others do not bow down and cringe before them. Now charity corrects this fierceness, this hastiness of heart, and men through it gain a greater command over themselves and are not so easily inflamed, nor moved to anger. It is then a controlling remedy for those fiery tempers which can not brook the least opposition, and hence it prohibits them from taking those rash actions and proceedings which the passionate often take when angered, actions and proceedings which often cause the most terrible evils. Charity quenches the spirit of revenge or retaliation, and returns good for evil. The truly charitable man, when he is wronged or injured, does not retaliate, but patiently bears with the many injuries and insults of others. Even when he must of necessity proceed against his enemies he does not take all the advantages the law allows him, but will proceed in the mildest way he can, and will have tried every gentle means he can think of before having recourse to severe ones. In this respect he imitates his Lord, who forgives sinners again and again. How very often has Christ told us to love our fellow men. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 39). "All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them" (Matt. vii. 12). "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John xv. 12). "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; bless them that curse you; pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (Matt. v. 44). In order to keep this ever impressed upon our minds He has taught us, in His own beautiful prayer, to say: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that

trespass against us" (Matt. vi. 12). To this beautiful expression Christ afterward adds: "But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offenses" (Matt. vi. 14). Does not God deal with us just as He wishes us to act toward others? Has He not borne with our faults and sins for many years, and forgiven us again and again? Truly God's love for us makes Him patient. From Calvary's heights He preached this great lesson of fraternal charity. After having undergone the most terrible tortures, what does He cry out when dying on the cross? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). Ah, what a beautiful lesson we learn from this, the very Son of God praying for His enemies. Yet He has said to us: "Love one another as I have loved you" (John xv. 12). His love for us was gratuitous, constant, universal; so must ours be.

2. Again as the apostle says, "Charity is kind." Charity not only causes us to bear patiently with the faults of others, but it also fills us with the desire to do good to all men, to promote with all our powers their real happiness, both in this life and the next, but especially in the next. It makes us benevolent at heart and beneficent in our outward actions. For benevolence is that act of charity which consists in wishing well to every one and produces a sympathy which causes us to "rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep" (Rom. xii. 15). Such benevolence shows itself in acts of beneficence; it particularly seeks for the spiritual welfare of our neighbors, and labors in every manner to help them to save their souls. Such charity, whilst it does not altogether put aside earthly things; yet rises to sublime and eternal things; whilst it does not neglect the corporal works of mercy, is still more anxious about those which are spiritual. What act could be kinder or more beneficial than that which in every way promotes the spiritual welfare of men? From this inward benignity there flows an outward beneficence, which shows itself in feeding the poor, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, and the like, doing all possible for them according to time, place, and condition of those we assist. The grand result of this is the making of those formerly irritable affable, complaisant, and condescending. It also ameliorates much suffering, it wins many back to God. How grand this virtue which makes men not only patient toward those who injure them, but causes them to return good for evil, blessings for cursing, and softens the heart even of the most savage. This is true, sterling

charity, springing from the love of God for His own sake and man for God's sake. How Godlike is it, for "God is charity, and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God" (I. John iv. 16).

3. The apostle now shows us that charity is not only patient and delights in doing good, but that it is entirely opposed to the spirit of the world and those who belong to it. "Charity is not envious." There are people in the world who are always watching, spying upon, and criticising their neighbors. The good fortune of another is bitter gall and wormwood to them. They try their best to hide his success, they make it appear as little as possible, they make disparaging remarks about him, they often tear his character into tatters. Strange as it may appear, yet it is perfectly true that these people can not endure that others are thought better and wiser than them. They seem to think that all said in the praise of others is a detraction from them; hence, full of envy, they take every opportunity by lies, calumny, and detraction, to lessen, to depreciate their neighbor's abilities and to lower him in the esteem of men. These people are angry and grieved at the prosperity of another, and ascribe his advancement to favor, chance, or anything else, rather than worth or merit. They are indeed proud and covetous, and are therefore envious. They must think highly of themselves if they can not bear others to rise above them; they pursue the things of earth most eagerly, and if they can not grasp honestly good fortune or prosperity, they hate and detest those who do. This is a great injustice to God, since they would not allow Him to bestow His benefits where and when He wishes, and it is also an injustice to our neighbor, since it deems him quite unworthy of any blessings.

True charity, on the other hand, instead of being envious, wishes all well and endeavors to promote their prosperity both spiritually and temporally in every way possible. The man who is really charitable is ever ready to help others on to success and holiness, and he can not be grieved nor envious when he sees his neighbor prosper, for the result is partly from his own charitable efforts, and charity can not envy its own success. The charitable man who labors to convert the sinner can not be grieved when that sinner is converted. On the contrary, he is rejoiced and delighted. Why? Because he loves God, and man for God's sake. Now God will not be offended, now the man will not be in deadly peril, his soul is safer, his salvation surer. Envious people have not true charity, and there is nothing which makes them more like the devil than this horrible

vice. Lucifer, because he was proud and covetous, envied God His greatness; he would ascend above the stars, be greater than God, but lo, the next moment he was humbled and hurled into hell. He envies us the happiness of heaven; hence he ever labors to make us offend God and lose it. Envy then is the dark passion of the devil, and surely they are his children who, on account of pride and greed, act in every way like him.

4. "Charity is not puffed up." True charity is opposed to pride and vanity. Christ describes a class of men whose character and actions He detests. In the performance of good and in charitable works they, as it were, sound a trumpet, so that all in the synagogues or churches or in the streets may attend, see, notice, and proclaim afar their goodness and holiness (Cf. Matt. vi. 1, 2). Now there are many such people living in our day. They are very proud and seek the praise and esteem of men, and when they act charitably make a great outward show. They will give alms if many are about to notice their doing so. They will pray for sinners in the streets if there is a crowd to listen to their words, but they never pray in private. In the church, when the congregation is there, so are they, making a great show of their religion if others notice them, but they are never there when the church is nearly empty. Nay, they go further. Lest people should not notice their charity and holiness, they take good care to tell them in loud, brazen tones, imitating the Pharisee, who went up into the Temple to do so. "O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke xviii. 11, 12). Many there are who, if they do not actually speak thus in church, take good care to make a great show there, and are careful to speak about their goodness elsewhere. How opposite is all this to the spirit of true charity is clear from Our Lord's words: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. vi. 1). To such as act to gain the esteem and praise of men in these matters Christ says: "Amen I say to you, you have received your reward" (Matt. vi. 2). Need we say that such people have not true charity, for this holy virtue always suppresses vanity and pride and acts in secret wherever it can. It does not make us seek our own glory, but that of God. It ever seeks to do good in secret, and only appears publicly when it cannot do otherwise. Its object is to win the

praise and blessing, not of men, but of God, because it loves God for His own infinite goodness and man for God's sake. Hence it has no part with vanity or pride.

Brethren, we might dwell upon many more properties of this holy virtue, but you have heard enough to know whether or not it is rooted in your hearts. Lent is near, and during that holy time, we must examine our souls, with a view to changing and improving our lives. Minutely then must we examine our hearts upon this, the holy virtue of charity, and see if this great queen of virtues reigns there. Are we of that number who do all our good works to be seen by men? Are we quick, passionate, and retaliate and seek revenge upon almost every occasion when we suffer some trifling injury? Perhaps we are amongst that crowd who are ever detracting, criticizing, and calumniating others? And do we not envy others their prosperity, and because we are proud and covetous, seek to crush them? Ah, these are terrible signs, signs that true Christian charity, the love of God, and the love of our neighbor has no place in our hearts. Yet St. Paul says that it is the greatest of all virtues. "Charity is patient, charity is kind, charity is not envious, is not puffed up." Ah, brethren, think continually of the apostle's words: "And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor; and if I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Charity is indeed absolutely necessary for the salvation of ourselves. We shall never enter heaven unless we possess it.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

BY THE REV. W. R. CARSON.

"And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd"—John x. 16.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—*Unification of knowledge the test of intellectual greatness. All knowledge one in Christ. Unity realized in His Church.*

I. In what does this unity consist? Analogy of shepherd and flock.

II. Insufficient theories. (1) Unity in fundamental doctrines. Answer. Conflicting, unsatisfactory to reason, disapproved by antiquity. (2) Spiritual unity of grace. Answer. Church is visible. Church contains bad with the good. (3) Sacramental Unity. Answer. Would include ancient heretics in Church.

III. (1) The unity is outward, organic. (2) Visible—unity of government—unity of head.

Conclusion.—(1). *Loyalty to the Vicar of Christ. (2) Duty of striving for the conversion of others.*

Such is the prophecy and promise of Jesus Christ, the good Shepherd. He foretells a note whereby men may know the Society which He came to establish; He promises that it shall have this characteristic work throughout all time—that it shall be one.

It is evidence of true genius so to unify knowledge that a simple principle may be seen to be at the bottom of many divergent laws. A man is great in any science in proportion as he learns to reduce conflicting truths to harmony, bringing to light some one universal principle that may serve to explain the hidden workings of the multitudinous forces that play around us. The simpler the principle, the greater has been the discovered truth. So it has been with such generalizations of genius as the law of gravity in the domain of science, the law of conservation of energy in the sphere of physics, the law relating to the circulation of our blood in the school of medicine.

Now, if this be true of genius in the natural order, it is not otherwise in the spiritual order of grace and truth. Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, was indeed possessed of all knowledge; He read nature as a book; no secrets were hid from Him whose mind was ever bathed in the Beatific Vision of the Godhead; but He also showed outwardly the mark of genius—unity of conception—in the supernatural work which He performed on earth—the creation of a Divine Society that was to bear His name and to preserve His truth.

He instituted a Society that was to be His Body, His Bride, the recipient of His spirit, the channel of His graces, the depository of His doctrine; and He chose unity as its distinguishing feature. This unity was to testify of His genius in the spiritual world; it was to speak to men of the Divinity of His claims. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me and I in thee . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John xvii. 21).

What, then, was the meaning of this unity? In what did it consist? In other words, in what sense do we believe that Christ's promise has been fulfilled?

"There shall be one fold and one shepherd." Even as the Head is one, so the Body is to be one.* The shepherd is one, and the

* It should be noted that, according to the Greek text, Christ does not, strictly speaking, mention "one fold," but "one flock" (*ποίμνη*); but, as one of the ablest modern exponents of the High Anglican position, Dr. Gore, says, "This point has been sometimes quite unduly insisted upon"

sheep under him are one. His unity is the symbol and instrument of theirs. They are guarded, kept together in connection with each other, separated from other flocks by him; it is, in fact, to the unity of his personality that they owe their own collective unity.

So, brethren, when Jesus Christ compares His Church to a flock of sheep and dwells upon the unity of this little collection of irrational animals as the characteristic which is to mark that spiritual society, of which He was the shepherd and head, as His own, He plainly intended us to understand a very real, a very essential and a very necessary unity. The Church must be one, the flock one; for as there is but one Head, so there must be but one Body; as there is but one shepherd, so there must be but one flock. And hence it is that in the Creeds we profess our belief not more firmly in one God and one Lord Jesus Christ than in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Let us consider, then, more particularly the nature of this unity. There are many paper theories on the subject. First of all, we have the plausible conception of a unity in fundamental doctrines—that is to say, it is sufficient for Christians to agree in certain points of belief, although they may differ in many others. We accept, such people exclaim, we accept the creeds of undivided Christendom; we worship the Triune God; we place all our hope in the Redeemer of men, believing in whom we have remission of our sins and everlasting life. Is not that a sufficient bond of unity?

But we ask in reply how are we to distinguish the fundamental and essential doctrines from those that are unessential and can be accepted or rejected at will? And the upholders of this theory have each a different answer. They have at least twelve separate methods of discernment, and these *criteria* are either arbitrary or uncertain, as, for instance, those which lay down that only such doctrines are fundamental which, if denied, would undermine God's glory, or such as are plainly taught in Holy Scripture, or generally accepted by Christians.

These rules, it need scarcely be said, are utterly opposed to the tradition of the Fathers and the saints from the earliest times.

(R. C. Claims, ed. 4, p. 27, note 2). It is without doctrinal significance, for in truth the meaning is unaltered. Whether we think of "one fold," one pen in which the sheep are herded together, or of "one flock," one distinct collection of sheep, in either case the unity of the sheep, corresponding to, as it is derived from, the unity of the shepherd is the leading idea.

The Church with St. Paul has never ceased to cry anathema on him who would dare to preach another Gospel from that committed by her Divine Lord to His apostles and their successors—whether that Gospel be concerned with so-called “fundamental” doctrines or not. They have been considered heretics right down the long centuries of her warfare against sin and error, who denied any truth taught authoritatively by her, speaking in the name of Christ. The one norm and rule by which a doctrine was judged to be orthodox or heretical lay in its agreement or disagreement with the ecclesiastical tradition, the revelation committed in its entirety to the Church to unfold to men. Those who disregarded that tradition, and set at naught the Divine Teacher appointed by God Himself, were considered to be outside the pale of Catholic unity, aliens and outcasts from the true Israel of the elect.

In the next place, we are told confidently that what makes the Church one is neither agreement in fundamental doctrine nor in submission to the same government and authority, nor inter-communion in the Eucharist—the bond and pledge of unity—but a certain mysterious spiritual community in supernatural gifts. “The Church,” says a prominent defender of this view, “is the spirit-bearing body, and what makes her one in heaven, paradise, and earth is not an outward but an inward fact—the indwelling of the Spirit, which brings with it the indwelling of Christ.”*

Now this is undoubtedly a beautiful conception, and, in a limited sense, a true one of unity. It is the case that all who are united to God in Christ by faith, hope, charity,—who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have had poured upon them the Spirit’s sevenfold gifts,—who have struggled against temptation and have taken hold of eternal life,—that such are at one with each other from the very fact that they are united to God, the source of all unity and concord.

But can this be said to constitute the unity of Christ’s Church? Does this wholly invisible, because spiritual, relation effect what the Master promised and prayed for—“That they all may be one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me”?

Surely this unity foretold by Christ is the very reverse of a unity so spiritual and invisible that it is non-existent to the eyes of men.

* Dr. Gore, *op. antea cit.*, p. 26, *Cf. ibid.*, p. 30: “We maintain . . . that primarily the unity of the Church is in Scripture a unity of inward life, an invisible fact: it is in this that her essential unity primarily consists.”

Dissenters, non-episcopalians of all sorts, may be one in this latter sense; but will the Anglicans, who profess the theory which we are considering, admit that such belong to the visible Church?

If the Church of Christ be a kingdom, not a commonwealth; if she be as a net cast into the sea gathering fish of every kind, both bad and good, it is plain that the test of her unity can not be something invisible. No; it must be something real, palpable, open to the cognizance of the world, if it is to testify at all to the Divinity of her great Head's mission. The Church must possess a visible oneness *urbi et orbi*, not a mere unseen spiritual unity.

Nor, lastly, does this unity lie in the sacramental principle, as the Anglican writer, whom I have already quoted, proceeds to maintain. "The primary constituent," he says, "of Church unity is that inward, supernatural life, that life of the Spirit, which she derives through sacramental channels from Christ her head."*

This inward spiritual gift, say our opponents, is imparted since the Incarnation through material channels, and all who partake of that gift, who share in the outward means whereby this inward life is ingrafted into our souls, are from that very fact of a common participation united "in the derivation of the life of the Spirit from Christ, down the channels of His organized Society."†

We have the sacraments, they maintain, and what more can we possibly want to make us vitally at one with the saints of all ages?

Does this unity of sacramental life suffice? We have the universal testimony of the Catholic Church to the contrary. Up to the time of the Reformation every heretical and schismatical body had valid orders and true sacraments. The Arians, the Nestorians, the Eutychians, the Monothelites, the Donatists,—all had bishops and priests, Eucharists and communions. But did that fact better one whit their position; did it unite them to the Catholic Church? You know that it did not. We can not allow that our Anglican friends possess valid orders, but even if they did possess them, it would not affect in the least their condition, for it has nothing whatever to do with the great question as to what constitutes the unity of the true Church of Jesus Christ.

This unity, then, is not something invisible: nor does it lie in agreement in fundamental truths, nor yet in a like participation of true sacraments. It is an outward organic unity, not a fictitious

* *Op. antea cit.*, p. 37.

† *Dr. Gore op. cit.*, p. 36.

unity of churches cut off from each other as dead branches from a living tree, but a unity whereby all members profess the same faith, hearken to the same voice, belong to the same flock, follow the same shepherd. "There shall be one fold, one flock, one shepherd."

The sheep are outwardly at unity, outwardly under the same obedience. So, too, in the Church of God, the "little flock" of His love. We who belong to the Catholic and Roman Church show to the unbelieving world the spectacle of a perfect unity—the unity of a common faith, of a close intercommunion, of a common organization, of a common government. In the Catholic Church of today, as of the first centuries, the Master's prayer has been answered, His prophecy fulfilled—"that they all may be one as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee . . . that the world may know that thou hast sent me."

The faith of Catholics is the same in every land. It is true that the Church has her revealed doctrines, her fundamental truths, and those which are matters of opinion. But it is she who settles controversies, who hushes the angry voices as they ring out fiercely in disputes, it is she, the Teacher sent from God, who judges what is fundamental, and so unity is preserved, for he who refuses to listen to her voice shuts himself out from her communion and her true deep life of faith and love.

The unity of the Church is, moreover, something visible, not merely an invisible attribute. There must be a unity of government, all members being visibly united in one body politic,—in a word, there must be the unity of a sheepfold, the unity of a kingdom. Nor does it suffice that two or more bodies should have identity of institutions—an Episcopate, for instance—in order for them to be one, any more than it does for two nations or kingdoms. "Do you call," writes Cardinal Newman, "England and Prussia one visible body politic, because both are monarchies, both have aristocracies, both have courts of justice, both have universities, both have churches, and both profess the Protestant religion?"* The Catholic Church manifests this true outward unity of organization; all her members are visibly one; she has, as St. Cyprian says, an external visible unity of her bishops, clergy, and faithful, not because they themselves are visible, but because they are visibly united. This outward visibility of government is concentrated

* In a letter published in *Cyril Westward*, by H. P. Russell, p. 129.

and centralized in the outward authority of a supreme governor. The more simplified the compelling power, the more it is reduced to a single principle, the closer and stronger becomes the unity of the body. That which is one in itself can more easily and surely impress the character of true unity on many members.

So it is, brethren, that in the Society made up of men and women which was to have this outward unity of government, there is one shepherd to whom the one flock, the greatest in it as well as the least, pay ready honor, one and faithful obedience. Christ is the true "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (I. Peter ii. 25), but He has committed to another the task of feeding His lambs and governing His sheep. "Feed my lambs . . . shepherd (*ποιμαίνει*) * my sheep," was the charge of the risen Lord to Peter and Peter's heirs.

The supremacy of the visible head of Christ's visible Church instituted by Divine authority, has ever been the keystone of the arch of the Church's unity. "There is," cries St. Cyprian in the fourth century, "one God and one Christ, and one Church founded on a rock by the Lord's own voice" (Ep. 43). "Peter," writes St. Augustine, "is the type of the one Church" (Serm. 76 in Matth., nn., 1-4). The sheep hear the shepherd's voice; they are fed by the shepherd's doctrine; they are kept together in unity and peace by the shepherd's authority. Christ's Church is an organized visible body; but a body without a head in the same order of life as itself—that is, a visible body without a visible head—is an absurdity. The Lord in founding a visible Society gave it at the same time a visible head, and that head was one in order that the body, too, might be one. For it is the business of the head to preserve the body's unity. So long as the members are united by close attachment, by loyal obedience, by constant reference to the head, they will be kept in harmony and peace. "There shall be one fold and one shepherd."

And this, brethren, is our duty and calling: To hold fast to the Head which is Christ by holding fast in lowly submission to His representative on earth, the Pope who sits in Peter's chair. We have to guard jealously the Church's unity by our fidelity to the Church's head. His least word should be law to us, his least wish a command.

* According to Scriptural usage, to be a shepherd signifies to rule. See Apoc. ii. 27; Psalm ii. 9; Micheas v. 2.

By that obedience and loyalty we shall best show to others the reality of the vital unity of our holy mother the Church.

"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring in." Christ, the good Shepherd, calls us to aid Him. Many sheep are straying outside the fold; many are hungering for true nourishment; many are yearning for the peace of Catholic unity. We must bring them in; and how? By fervent, unceasing prayer; by the example of steadfast obedience to the Vicar of Christ and those whom he has set over us; by unfailing charity toward our separated brethren—a charity that thinketh no evil; by an increase of the knowledge and love of God whereby we may learn humility in our judgments, abstinence from "railing accusations," bitter gibe and unchristian sneer; in all things preserving "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," laboring zealously for the return to the one fold and the one shepherd of all such as have erred and are deceived, striving to win one day the benediction of Him who has said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

BY THE REV. P. C. YORKE.

"And he was transfigured before them."—Gospel.

SYNOPSIS.—A casual relation between Christ's sufferings and His transfiguration. True also for us. Because, first, rest, reward, etc., must be earned by work; second, work efficacious only when restrained; third, men need discipline even in spirituals; fourth, self-discipline proper to man; fifth, indiscipline means destruction. Therefore, since Christ has given us the example let us follow Him by self-denial even to labor.

My dear brethren, we have hardly entered on the season of Lent, with its lessons of prayer and penance, when we are taken up with Peter, James and John, to behold the glory of our Lord. Last Sunday we stood with Him on the mountain of temptation; this Sunday we stand with Him on the mountain of transfiguration. We are invited to lift up our thoughts for a moment from the mourning and weeping of this valley of tears. Christ is transfigured before

us. His face doth shine like the sun, His garments have become white as snow. In the brightness of the cloud into which we have entered how petty are our trials, how insignificant our privations. We, too, have a part in the divine voice, "This is my beloved son." "For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God, and if sons, heirs also, and joint heirs with Christ, yet so if we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."

✱ It is precisely because of the connection between suffering and glory that this Gospel is so suited for the season of Lent. The one is the cause of the other according to the words of the apostle. "It was necessary for Christ to suffer and thus enter into his glory." In like manner we, too, must suffer with Christ if we would reign with Him. There is a transfiguration reserved for us. With St. Paul "we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ who will reform the body of our lowliness made like to the body of his glory." The price we must pay for that transfiguration is the self-discipline which we must practise at all times, but especially during these days of Lent. It is not an easy price to pay, and however willing the spirit, the flesh is always weak. Therefore it is a good thing to hearten ourselves often with the thought of the reward. "That which is at present momentary and light in our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

It is a general rule, my dear brethren, that rest is the child of toil, peace of war, joy of sorrow. You know of your own knowledge that no bread tastes so sweet as that which your own toil has earned; that no evening falls so grateful as when you return to your home, weary it may be, but with the consciousness of duty done. Every pleasure must be earned, and they who get their pleasures without effort find them in the tasting Dead Sea fruit, bitterness and ashes. The unthinking envy those who inherit great wealth and have the means to gratify every desire. But the experience of mankind bears witness that neither much money nor gentle blood can assure happiness and content. "Sleep," saith the Scripture, "is sweet to a laboring man whether he eat little or much; but the fulness of the rich will not suffer him to rest."

It is an old saying that he knows not how to appreciate sweet things who has not tasted bitter. That nation can not understand the blessings of peace that has not felt the storm and stress of war.

It is in sorrow we lay the only sure foundations of happiness, for "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy," as the Psalmist says, "going they went and wept casting their seeds; but coming they shall come in exultation carrying their sheaves."

However, dear brethren, it is not all work that produces good results, nor is every sorrow unto salvation. There is a sorrow that like a proud river pours over its bounds and carries wreck and ruin, so there is work which is poured out like water, and like water poured out is swallowed up in the thirsty sands. Every day experience proves to us that energy must be under restraint if we would make profit of it. A single lightning flash is, perhaps, more powerful than all the electric machines in the world together. Yet the lightning wastes itself in a moment, while the stored fluid turns millions of wheels that bring comfort and prosperity to mankind. The vine if it would bear fruit must be carefully pruned, else its force will spend itself in barren shoots and showy leaves. The steam that in harness can do a world's work when free is but a gentle vapor, the sport of every breeze, and the dynamite that is able in the twinkling of an eye to move mountains, burns harmless and slow when unconfined in the open air.

So it is with men. Why is an army so strong while a mob is so weak? In the army there is discipline, every unit is under a certain restraint, every company moves to a definite end. In the mob there is anarchy. It may be a thousand times more numerous than the army, a thousand times richer, a thousand times more intelligent, but because it is a mob and under no discipline its strength is the strength of a rope of sand. How do the great captains of industry make their wealth? Not only must they have control of the natural sources, but they must organize, they must discipline men to their work. Every great manufactory, every great store is an army. Each man's force is confined to a certain channel, and because confined it is efficacious. There are no contrary currents, and friction is reduced to a minimum. All work together in harmony, and the Scripture is justified, "It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth."

Even in spiritual affairs, the necessity of discipline and organization is apparent. What is the Church but a great army in which the energies of men are so restrained and directed that it moves on irresistibly to its end? Consider the various offices and grades, the orders, the societies, the organizations, for one end and the other

and see how they are confined each within its own sphere, and made the more effective by such confinement to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Even in prayer, which is perhaps the most personal of all things, the Church has her discipline. Her public worship is regulated by the strictest and the minutest rules, and she conserves with stern fidelity the ancient and straight form of words in which she speaks to God.

Thus we see, dear brethren, in nature and in human affairs restraint and discipline are necessary if energy is to bear its full fruition. But there is this difference between natural forces and man: that in natural forces an outward restraint only is needed; in man there must be also restraint from within. Man's centre of activity is in his soul, and while he is limited and coerced outwardly in many ways, yet there is no real mastery over him which does not include the dominion of his soul.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.

In the social and economic organization of mankind outward or bodily conformity is often sufficient for success. The general may not care what the soldier thinks as long as the soldier obeys orders. But in the spiritual organization it is different. It is true that the Church demands certain external acts, such as presence at Mass on Sundays, the yearly confession, the Easter communion, but she also demands that there be an internal agreement with these acts, and that the soul and body cooperate in the performance of them. She teaches that the machinery of religion will not save us. Outward acts count for nothing if the will be absent. "The kingdom of God is within you," saith the Lord.

In this does man's dignity consist that he has free will. God gave him the choice of good or evil. When he chooses good he has the merit of choosing it; when he chooses evil he has to bear the responsibility. Nothing that happens to him against his will can be charged to him. He is free and independent—the master of himself.

Therefore, if he is to undergo discipline that will avail unto salvation it must be self discipline. His own will must curb and check his own energies and direct them aright if he is to be forceful for good. This truth did our Lord proclaim when He said: "If any man would come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me."

There are three conditions laid down here for the following of Christ, but the first of them is self-denial. We have many faculties, many endowments, many wants, many desires. These in the beginning were all good and might be gratified with propriety, but since the fall the corruption of our nature has infected them, and some must be curbed, some refined, and some utterly denied and rooted up. In this undertaking we are not left entirely to our own reason, for the reason has suffered as well as the will, but besides the law written on the fleshly tablets of our hearts we have the positive commands of God and the precepts of His Church which He instituted to teach us.

This, then, is the beginning of self-discipline—the consciousness that we are under law. God has laid obligations upon us, and we do our duty to Him by fulfilling these obligations. The very idea of duty signifies discipline and denial. We do our duty not because we like it, but because we ought. It carries us again and again counter not only to our passing inclinations, but to the very trend of our being because God's ways are not our ways, and "the imagination and thought of man's heart is prone to evil from his youth."

Our senses, our imagination, our concupiscence, our very reason draw us again and again to paths forbidden of God. The eyes allure us one way, the ears another. At times it is true we see only the good and beautiful, and listen only to the maxims of wisdom, but too often they draw us to sights of sin or suggest thoughts and words of evil. Then is the time to remember duty and to deny ourselves. Then is the time to be on the alert and to force our eyes to see between us and the sinful object, God's law, like the flaming sword turning every way, and to compel our ears to hear the thunder of His voice on Sinai: "I am the Lord thy God, mighty and jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, showing mercy to thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

We know, dear brethren, that there is in the world a philosophy which makes little of self-denial. Some men there are who openly declare: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Of these the apostle says: "Their God is their belly: their glory is in their shame." Your own experience tells you how quickly they pass away and how true is St. Paul's word concerning them, "Their end is destruction."

But there are others who while they refrain from this vulgar materialism sneer at self-denial and self-discipline as old-fashioned and unfit for the circumstances of the age. They decry the Church's facts as unsuited to these enlightened days, and laugh at the recommendations of the saints for the custody of the eyes, the thoughts, the desires. They would see everything, they would hear everything, they would read everything, they would experience everything. They boast of their liberality, and relegate to bigots and the feeble-minded that habit of denying one's self which Christ proclaims as the first condition of following Him.

Dear brethren, as sure as destruction is the end of the sensualist, so sure is destruction the end of the undisciplined. No matter in what name they throw off the yoke, license always has its revenge. It may dazzle for awhile, but darkness soon swallows it up. In these principles did the great pagan civilizations found themselves, and where are they now? The night owl dwells in their deserted palaces. The ships of Tharsis have sailed away. "Go not after thy lusts," saith Holy Writ, "but turn away from thine own will. If thou give thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thine enemies."

Therefore, brethren, at this season, and on this day, let us remember that nature herself teaches that force, to be efficacious, must be restrained, and if men would work out their salvation they must work it out in self-denial and self-discipline. It is our destiny to be transfigured into the likeness of Christ, and that destiny we can reach only by the means Christ has provided. "If any man would come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." This is the royal road, the king's highway, and the only way Christ is our captain. He does not ask us to do what He has not done, nor to follow where He has not led. We read in history how great generals have animated their troops to heroic deeds because they themselves suffered all their soldiers suffered, and endured everything they asked others to endure. So it is with our Lord. He has given us the example of self-denial, of self-discipline, of poverty, of toil, of suffering, aye, even of death itself. Shall we be afraid and hold back when our captain goes before us? Shall this season seem long and hard when we see Him fasting in the wilderness, or praying all night on the mountain? Shall sufferings, or sorrow, or sickness, or loss dishearten us when we contemplate Him in whom from the crown of His head to the sole of His foot there is no soundness, but wounds, and bruises, and swelling sores? Shall we refuse to

sacrifice our will after the example of Him who came not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him? Let us then in His name gird ourselves to the undertaking. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." Remember whither we follow Christ. He is leading us up a high mountain apart. The slopes of Tabor are steep and the way is straight, but at the summit we know we shall find our transfigured Lord, and the prophets, and the apostles, and the everlasting tabernacles. There also is our place. There shall this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, for there "beholding the glory of the Lord with open face we shall be transformed into the same image from glory to glory—as by the spirit of God."

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

DANGERS OF A RELAPSE INTO SIN.

BY THE VERY REV. F. C. DOYLE, O.S.B.

"The last state of that man becomes worse than the first."—Luke xi. 26.

SYNOPSIS.—*The unclean spirit, undaunted by his ejection, returns to the assault and endeavors to effect an entrance into the soul. If he succeeds in so doing, the man who yields to his onslaught is called a relapsing sinner. I wish to point out to you the dangers of this return to sin; to suggest certain means by which it may be prevented.*

(1) *In order to put before you these dangers, I will use the arguments of the great ascetical teachers. To do this, I must reason from analogy and suppose that God is animated by sentiments similar to those that stir in the hearts of men. Only in this way can we bring home to ourselves God's antagonism to sin. What then are God's sentiments for one who, setting aside the divine law, has indulged in all the vices of his fallen nature; who has afterward repented of them; and who then repents of his repentance and returns to the evil that he had renounced? It is a feeling of disgust, provoking God to reject and punish him with the utmost severity. This is the first danger of a relapse.*

(2) *This return to sin engenders in the sinner a weakness, a sort of inability to resist evil; for it deprives of much of their force those means which at first moved him to repentance. So true is this that St. Paul says it is impossible to raise a relapsing sinner; meaning by the word impossible not an absolute but a relative impossibility—that is to say, a matter of great difficulty. This is the second danger.*

(3) *The power acquired by the devil over the soul that relapses into sin is greater. The holier his preceding life has been, the viler becomes his after life, as St. Augustine testifies. This is the third danger of a relapse.*

Having put before you the dangers of a relapse, let me now suggest to you the means which will prevent it.

(1) *Ever to keep brightly burning in our hearts the lamp of faith.*

(2) *This lively faith will engender in us the spirit of prayer, prayer to God for aid to strengthen our weakness and to enable us to triumph over our adversary.*

(3) *Faith and prayer will move the soul to avoid the occasions that have hitherto proved fatal to it.*

(4) *Faith, prayer, and the avoiding of occasions will have the effect of urging the soul to have frequent recourse to those sources of grace—Penance and the Holy Eucharist.*

When, by the grace of God, the unclean spirit has been cast out of a man, his defeat and ejection do not dishearten him nor extinguish in him the hope of again establishing his sway over the being that has been freed from his thralldom. He knows the weakness of his former slave, the fickleness of his purpose, the instability of his will. Therefore, he returns to the house whence he has been cast, and though he finds it swept clean of the filth with which it had been heretofore disfigured and adorned with all the beauty of divine grace, he is not shaken in his fixed resolve once again to make it his own. He calls to his aid other spirits of evil more wicked than himself; he lays siege to it; he hurls against it his fiery darts; he wearies not in his efforts till he is either ignominiously repulsed or he has forced an entrance. The man who succumbs to the fury of this onslaught, who forgets the promises that he has made, the tears of repentance that he has shed, the gracious pardon accorded to him by a loving Father and once more plunges into the mire of unholy living, is called a relapsing sinner. His last state is said by our Lord to be worse than that out of which he had been delivered. I shall not attempt to prove this to you; the words of the great Master are enough to make it evident. I shall, however, point out to you the dangers of a relapse into sin, and then suggest to you the means which will enable you to remain steadfast in the service of God.

I. DANGERS OF A RELAPSE.—(1) In my attempt to set before you the dangers of a relapse into sin, I shall make use of those arguments which the great ascetical teachers of the spiritual life employ to retain in the paths of holiness and justice those who, having listened to their instructions, have succeeded in breaking away from their former life of sin. For this purpose, I must reason from analogy, and, just as the Sacred Scriptures do, I must suppose that our heavenly Father is animated by the same feelings that stir in the hearts of his children. We are forced to do this, in

order to bring home to ourselves His antagonism to evil, an antagonism which is essential to the very notion implied in the name "God." Hence we attribute to Him anger, indignation, aversion, hatred—not that He is moved by any of these passions, but that only in this way are we able to understand His attitude with respect to sin. With this notion clearly before your minds, I shall ask you to consider what are the sentiments of God with respect to one who returns to the evil ways from which divine grace has rescued him. Suppose that in his early youth, yielding to the fiery impetuosity of his fallen nature, to the seductions of evil company and to the temptations of the devil, he has cast aside his religious beliefs and all that they have taught him. He gives up prayer; he never enters a church; he forsakes the sacraments; he tries to obliterate faith—not to believe in God, in a future state, in the rewards and the punishments of an Almighty Ruler. He gives a free rein to his thoughts and his desires; he allows his eyes to feast themselves upon scenes of depravity; he indulges his senses in those things for which they crave. He lives the life of a libertine. But in that life he finds, as all find who have trodden the same way, naught but bitterness, remorse, vanity, nothingness. The void in his heart is not filled by these things. That heart cries out for something that will satisfy its craving, till at last, touched by the grace of God, it wearily and painfully fights its way back to the height whence it fell. He returns to God. He is filled with shame. He goes through the agony of repentance. Like the Prodigal, he journeys back to his Father's house. He is filthy; he is in rags; he has consorted with swine; he has tried to satisfy himself with the garbage which even they disdained to eat. He falls upon his knees before Him whom he has so grievously offended, whose wealth he has so shamefully squandered. That Father lifts him from the earth; cleanses him from his filth; clothes him in the garments of purity and gives him the pledge of love. He is received to favor; he is once more free of his ancestral home. But after a time, he wearies of the quiet, the order, the repose, the sameness of his Father's house. He grows restless. He hears the voices of his dissolute companions calling. In imagination, he catches glimpses of their so-called pleasures. He is tempted to rejoin them; he wavers; he yields. Once more he turns his back upon the home of his childhood; he squanders his patrimony; he indulges in all the vices over which he has wept such bitter tears and in which he found only disgust.

Now let me ask you, what would be the feelings of an earthly father if this had happened not once or twice, but hundreds of times? They would be feelings of righteous indignation, anger, disgust. Such also are the sentiments which, on the part of God, the relapsing sinner has only too good reason to fear. God will be filled with disgust for him who, after being so often cleansed, returns to wallow in the mire out of which he has been so often drawn. In the terribly strong language of Holy Writ—a language most offensive to the ears of a corrupt and polished society—the relapsing sinner is likened to the dog that returns to his vomit, to the swine that return to wallow in the mire. He is a hateful, disgusting object, provoking God to launch forth the lightning of His wrath, to sweep him from the face of the earth. He is so criminal that St. Peter says God's justice will be more tolerable to the unbeliever who has never known the way of truth than to him who, having known and walked in it, has perversely forsaken it to walk in the way of iniquity (II. Peter ii. 21). This, then, is the first danger threatening him who relapses into sin. His relapse provokes and excites the disgust of God.

(2) Besides inspiring God with disgust and thus rendering the sinner's return to favor a matter of great difficulty, a relapse exposes him to another danger springing from himself. It strips of much of their force the aids to repentance and by weakening man's will-power decreases his ability to resist evil. What was it that, with the cooperation of God's grace, enabled him to cast off the servitude holding him captive under the dominion of the devil? The light of God's countenance shone upon his darkened conscience, and he saw the turpitude of sin, its deformity, its ingratitude; the gift of heavenly grace was poured into his heart; the Holy Spirit of God was infused into him; the bread of angels was bestowed upon him to feed, to nourish and to give him the pledge of glorious things promised in the life to come. He has enjoyed all these privileges; he has made use of all these helps; he has thus been able to burst asunder the bands holding him captive. Knowing this, and considering the happy estate of his former slave, the devil, as we saw, returns reinforced by spirits of evil more wicked, more subtle than himself, to pervert the will that, by the grace of God, had been turned to good. If the soul should yield to his assault, what will then be able to enlighten the intelligence, to stir the heart, to move the will? The means that previously helped it have lost much of

their power. Therefore, the difficulty of return is very considerably increased. Moreover, it is with the soul as with the body; the soul has its maladies as the body has. There is a blindness, a deafness, a paralysis, a leprosy of the soul as there are similar diseases of the body. Now, the masters of the spiritual life argue concerning these spiritual maladies, just as physicians do concerning the material ills that affect the body. Medical men tell us, and our own experience corroborates the truth of what they say, that a malady which again and again attacks the body becomes each time more difficult of cure; that a bone which if often broken is each time with greater difficulty reset; that a wound which is again and again opened is always harder to close and to heal. Therefore, the masters of Christian asceticism conclude that the same consequences are to be looked for in the spiritual ills that affect the soul. If, after being restored to health, the soul is again attacked by the malady of which it has been healed, the will-power to rid itself of the evil decreases with each successful seizure. So true is this that St. Paul makes the startling assertion that the relapsing sinner's restoration to grace and favor with God is an impossibility. "It is impossible for those who were once illuminated, who have tasted also the heavenly gift, and who were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have moreover tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come and are fallen away, to be renewed again to penance, crucifying again to themselves the Son of God and making him a mockery" (Heb. vi. 4-6). The apostle is, of course, speaking not of an absolute but only of a relative impossibility; for he himself received back to favor and repentance the incestuous Corinthian. Therefore, when he says it is impossible for a relapsing sinner to be again renewed to penance, he is pointing out to us the extreme difficulty of so doing. It is in the same sense that we must understand those words of his in which he says: "If we sin wilfully after having the knowledge of the truth, there is now left no sacrifice for sins, but a certain dreadful expectation of judgment, and the rage of a fire that shall consume the adversaries" (Heb. x. 26). In this sense also must be understood the words in which he assigns the reason for speaking with so great severity: "For, if a man making void the law of Moses (by breaking it) dieth without any mercy under two or three witnesses, how much more, do you think, he deserveth worse punishments who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean by which he was

sanctified and hath offered an affront to the spirit of grace?" (*Ibid.*). It will be evident, then, from what we have said and from the words of the apostle, that a relapse into sin is dangerous not only because it inspires God with sentiments of disgust and aversion for the sinner, but because it so enfeebles both the aids to repentance and the will-power to return as to make that return extremely difficult.

(3) This conclusion will receive further confirmation if we bear in mind the immense empire over the soul acquired by the devil at each succeeding relapse of the sinner into the disorders of which he has repented. When he began to sin, the wretched man was, with respect to his adversary, the devil, like an inexperienced gamester, taking his place, for the first time, at the card-table. The gamester is pitted against a merciless, keen-witted sharper, who, to draw him on, at first wins from him only a few pieces. The foolish youth then loses more and more, each time becoming more and more entangled in the meshes so skilfully woven round him, till all his ready money has gone into the coffers of his foe. He next stakes his capital, his houses, his lands, his all—falling at last completely into the power of the evil genius with whom he ventured to play. So is it with one who returns to the evil courses which he had abandoned. Each fall, each sin involves him more and more, till at last he is in the hands of the devil as a fly is in the entangling foes of the spider's web. At first he was the slave of only one devil; after relapsing into sin he becomes the thrall of seven others more wicked, more pitiless, more exacting than the tyrant who first robbed him of his freedom. Consequently, his last state is said by our Lord to be worse than his first, inasmuch as in that state the power over him exercised by the spirit of evil is greater. "Thus Lucifer, who was the fairest of the angels, became the worst of devils. So, too, Judas from an apostle became an apostate and betrayer of Christ. So, too, Nestorius, Eutyches, Pelagius, and Arius from monks and priests, became apostates and heresiarchs" (*Epist.* 137). Therefore, great is the danger of relapsing into sin, because it fills God with disgust for the sinner, it weakens both the aids to repentance and the sinner's will-power to resist; it delivers him up, bound hand and foot, into the power of the devil.

II. MEANS TO PREVENT A RELAPSE.—(1) If all this is true, as it most certainly is, then whoever has a care for his eternal well-being will make it his business, by every means at his disposal, to prevent

a relapse into sin. What are these means? A brief survey of those things which usually plunge men back into the evils out of which repentance has drawn them, will recall these means to your minds. When a man entering into himself, puts to himself the question: "What is it that has brought me to this pass, after all the trouble that I have taken and all the difficulties that I have overcome in cleansing myself from my sins," he will invariably discover that the first cause of his misfortune has been that he has allowed the light of his Catholic faith to grow dim. That light is, in reality, the pillar of fire which enables him, in the darkness of this world, to see his way toward the end for which God created him. Under its brilliant rays, various great and important truths stand out clear and well-defined like so many tall columns marking the road to life. It shows him that God is the end for which he was endowed with being; that the divine law is a means for training his soul for eternal existence with Him; that the violation of it, unless repented of, is followed by a penalty which is separation in the life to come from God the centre of his being; that his spark of life will presently be extinguished, and that then he will have to stand at the bar of divine justice to answer for all his deeds—to be rewarded if these have been good, to be punished if they have been evil; that earthly goods are vain, empty, unsatisfactory; that the possession and enjoyment of them all will profit him nothing, if God be not gained as the centre in which he is to find rest. Now, when the light of faith is suffered to grow dim, all these truths become obscure, and as that light gradually wanes till at last it is practically extinguished, they are so blurred that they cease to be seen at all. Having passed out of view, the beauty and the attractiveness of material things come forth into startling prominence. That beauty and that attractiveness captivate the heart and draw it to the pleasures and the gratifications which these material things offer. What matters it now that God has set His ban upon the pleasures which they promise? Disobedience to His law has lost its turpitude. What is offered instead of the joys of dutiful submission to them, is fair to the eye; it will be sweet to the taste; the number of those that stretch forth their hands and accept it, seems to sanction the act. He is fascinated; he yields, he returns to the evil of which he had repented. Therefore, the first means for preventing this lamentable defection from God, is to keep burning ever bright and clear the great light of faith which will flash into the intelligence the eternal truth that it

will profit a man nothing to have gained and enjoyed all that the world can offer, if the result of that enjoyment is to be separation from God for all eternity.

(2) Another means for keeping men's feet from straying out of the paths of holiness and justice, is prayer, which flows as naturally from faith as water does from a fountain. For, faith makes clear and evident to the soul not only the nothingness and the worthlessness of everything except God, but also the soul's weakness, its tendency in our present fallen state to set aside God for perishable, transitory things. Seeing this weakness and experiencing it in nature's incessant craving for earthly delights, faith impels the soul to turn for aid to God. It does so; and by means of daily, nay, of well-nigh continuous petitions to Him, there is put within its reach the irresistible might of the Omnipotent. That might enables it first to resist the attractive glitter of the baits usually held before its mental vision by the tempter, and then to rout the tempter himself and put him to ignominious flight.

(3) These two means, powerful and effective as they undoubtedly are, will nevertheless be shorn of all their force, unless the repentant sinner be careful to join with them another most necessary means. This is to keep away from the occasion of sin. It is the occasion that breaks the strength of the firmest resolve, as easily and as speedily as the sun's powerful rays dissolve an icicle. That occasion may be a person, or a place, or a thing. It is the stone that trips up the feet, the spark that ignites the fuel. If carefully avoided, there will be no fall, no destructive conflagration. But here is the difficulty. It may be practically impossible for a person to withdraw from the place that has proved fatal to his virtue; to avoid the person whose company has seduced him from the ways of righteousness; to escape from the presence of the objects which have been to his feet a stone of offense and a rock of scandal. In cases such as these, in which the occasion is not sought, is not voluntary, nothing but vigilance and fervent prayer will avail to render innocuous that which of its own nature is full of deadly peril. In other cases, however, the great safeguard is flight from the occasion. But in these cases, that is to say in cases in which this occasion may easily be avoided, subtle are the reasons for encountering them, suggested by the devil that is trying to wreck the soul. He whispers to it: "The occasion has lost its attractive force; the persons that were so seductive have been converted from their evil

ways; the places that once drew as a magnet draws steel, have lost their spell; the things that once enchanted, no longer have power to lure the soul. Therefore, there will now be no danger in frequenting the company, in visiting the places, in looking upon the things that heretofore have led into sin. They have lost their power to hurt; their sting is gone." Against these manifest falsehoods which fallen nature is so willing to believe, the repentant sinner must close his ears. The occasion is still a danger; if you wilfully go into it, that approach to it is an indication that you love it, and "he that loves the danger shall perish in it." Consequently, besides keeping alive your faith and lifting up your heart in prayer to God for help, you must keep away from the occasions of sin.

(4) To do this, there is, of course, necessity for a continual supply or influx of divine grace, and this influx is secured for you by the last means that I shall suggest for preventing a relapse into sin. This is a frequent use of the two great sacraments—Penance and Holy Eucharist. Penance was instituted by our Lord, not only to wash away sin and again and again to cleanse men from its stain should they again and again lapse into it, but to infuse into and to endow the soul with strength to resist it. For in that sacrament, what is it that washes away the stain, that takes away the guilt of transgression? It is the blood of Christ poured out upon the soul. In that blood, besides the power to cleanse, there is the might of Christ, the might of the omnipotent—"of that strong man armed keeping his court." Therefore a frequent approach to the tribunal of penance will, at one and the same time, preserve the purity of the soul and minister to it the power of resistance. That power of resistance or strength is fed by the other great sacrament, the Holy Eucharist. That strength is the result of spiritual life, and spiritual life is maintained in full vigor by a spiritual food. For, just as our natural life is not given to us by the food that we eat, but is only maintained by it, so our spiritual life, from which our strength comes, when infused into us by baptism or by penance, is preserved, is maintained by our spiritual food—the most Holy Eucharist. Therefore, whoever would remain faithful to God and prevent himself from relapsing into sin, must make use of these most efficacious means. He must keep the light of faith burning bright and clear; he must fervently pray to God for strength to resist; he must carefully shun all occasions of sin; and he must assiduously make use of the two great sacraments—Penance and Eucharist.

From what has been said concerning a relapse into sin, each of you will now be able to carry away a firm conviction that a return to the evil ways of which a man has repented is fraught with the utmost danger to his eternal salvation. For if, as we all admit, the devil is cunning, resourceful, powerful; the world in which we live, enchanting, fascinating; the flesh, in league with the world and the devil, and, like a savage animal ever straining at the chain holding it in check, easy must be the change from dutiful allegiance to criminal revolt against God. Therefore, this facility of relapse is one other reason for making you dread the dangers resulting from that defection. Dread it, because of the disgust which it excites in the heart of the good Father who has, perhaps, already oftentimes received you back to favor. Dread it, because of the dejection, the despair, and the enfeebling of the will-power which it engenders. Dread it, because of the empire over your naturally infirm nature, thereby acquired by the devil. I beseech you to ask God to pierce your hearts with this dread, for it will spur you on to make strenuous efforts to prevent that from becoming an actuality which is now only a possibility. Try ever to keep before your eyes the great truths of faith. Then you will be instant in prayer, you will avoid occasions of sin; you will frequent the sacraments that procure and feed the life of grace. Fortified by these means of resistance, you will be able to defy the spirit of uncleanness that is trying to effect an entrance into your soul. Though aided by seven other spirits more wicked than himself, he will never be able to effect his purpose; for you will have with you that strong man armed, Satan's conqueror, who will help you to keep your possessions in peace till God shall call you from this world of strife to the repose of your eternal home.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

SAINT JOSEPH.

BY THE VERY REV. P. A. SHEEHAN, D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—Devotion to St. Joseph hidden in the Church for centuries. Reasons for this. History of the devotion, showing its spread, its influence and its effects. Virtues brought out by the life of St. Joseph—humility, purity, attachment to our Divine Lord: St. Teresa and Pius IX. clients of St. Joseph. Recompense of St. Joseph. His death. Exhortation—Imitate Joseph so as to receive his reward.

A few days ago, my dear brethren, we celebrated the feast of the patron saint of our holy Church, the feast of St. Joseph. Let us to-day devote our contemplation to this great saint, and let me endeavor to put his virtues and glorious example so before you as to incite you to follow in his footsteps.

As the life of St. Joseph, M. B., was a hidden life upon earth, so devotion to St. Joseph, deep and ardent, though it always has been, has been hidden in the Church for centuries. It was reserved for Pius IX., Pius, the priest of the Sacred Heart, and the preacher of Mary's privileges, to bring St. Joseph more prominently before the faithful, thus reuniting, as it were, to the eyes of the faithful, the Holy Family of the House of Nazareth, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. In the apostolic decree, which constituted St. Joseph patron of the Universal Church, it is stated, "That the Church has always most highly honored and praised the most blessed Joseph, next to his Spouse, the Virgin Mother of God, and has besought his intercession in time of trouble." The development of doctrine and devotion in the Church, however, was necessarily very slow. For centuries the whole attention of the Church was directed to maintaining the true doctrines about the Incarnation. This was the fundamental truth of Christianity, and this was the most frequently and violently attacked. The God-Man, given by His own love, and the charity of the Father to the Church, was the precious treasure upon which during the early years of her existence, all her attention was lavished. All the marvelous mysteries wound around that central mystery of the Incarnation had to be explained, and all the attacks open and insidious, that sought to detract from the truth of that mystery and the honor of God had to be repelled. By degrees, when those con-

troversies on the Incarnation had subsided and the Church had a breathing-time, without for ever forgetting her Spouse, the Son, she directed her attention to the Mother, and by degrees, thinking them over first in her own deep mind, she put before her faithful truth after truth, and dogma after dogma about the Mother, her royal dignity, her divine maternity, her rich prerogatives, until in our own age, she reached the primary truth of all, that the Mother has never known sin, and the reality of her position was recognized, a Virgin and sinless. "And thus," as a holy priest has written, "the adoration to Jesus and the devotion to Mary took their places immovably in the sense of the faithful, and in the practical system of the Church, one shedding light upon the other, and both instructing, illuminating, nourishing, and sanctifying the people."

The claims of the all Holy Son and His virginal mother being satisfied, the Church was able to turn her attention to the guardian of both, the father of the household at Nazareth. The Church is a type of Mary, and there can be no doubt that Mary is a teacher of the Church. When, therefore, the truth of her Son's Incarnation was placed beyond doubt, and any honor paid to St. Joseph could not prejudice the divine origin of her Child, the Church of God learned from her teacher's lips the dignity and the holiness of Joseph, and gathered from her heart deep feelings of love and gratitude to Him. Mary's divine maternity protected and confirmed the truth of our Divine Lord's origin, but by a wise decree the Church did not publicly preach the dignity of St. Joseph, until the truth of the Incarnation was put beyond the cavils of heretics, lest the presence of St. Joseph might prejudice the exclusive right of the Eternal Father to the paternity of the Son. Devotion to an earthly father, even though he were only a fosterfather, might have given the enemies of Jesus Christ a pretense for denying His eternal generation from the Father; we must not, therefore, be surprised to find that public devotion to St. Joseph was not established in the Church as early as devotion to the Blessed Virgin, because the honor of our Divine Lord is to be maintained above all things; and whereas Mary's divine motherhood was the surest protection of the honor of the Son, devotion to St. Joseph would have been seized upon by captious heretics as a proof that the Church was regardless of that first truth of the Incarnation, that Christ had no earthly father. As St. Athanasius declares, "Born of the Father before all age; born of a mother in time."

But, although the Church's devotion to St. Joseph was not explicitly declared until the thirteenth century, there can be no doubt that his claims to the reverence of the faithful were fully acknowledged even in the earliest ages. It is to the east that common opinion traces the origin of devotion to St. Joseph. Before St. Athanasius in the fourth century sent missionaries into Abyssinia to instruct the Copts in the rites of the Church of Alexandria, the sojourn of the Holy Family in Egypt was commemorated in Abyssinia, and a special festival was kept in honor of St. Joseph. So, too, amongst the Christians of Syria, so ancient is the devotion, there is no record of its introduction amongst them. There can be no doubt, too, that in the Greek Church the devotion is of great antiquity, as may be gathered from their hymns, and the custom that everywhere prevailed in Greece of calling children by the name of Joseph. The history of the introduction of devotion to St. Joseph into the West is instructive. Father Faber is of opinion that the devotion sprang up in the West itself, in the south of France. "It rose," he says, "from a confraternity in the white city of Avignon, and was cradled by the swift Rhone, that river of martyr memories that runs by Lyons and Arles, and flows into the same sea that washes the shores of Palestine. The land which the contemplative Magdalen had consecrated by her hermit life, and where the songs of Martha's school of virgins had been heard praising God, and where Lazarus had worn a mitre instead of a grave-cloth; it was there that he who was so marvelously Mary and Martha combined first received the glory of his devotion."

There can be no doubt now, however, that the great majority of ecclesiastical writers trace the devotion to the East, and attribute its introduction into Europe to the Carmelite Order. And with the introduction of this devotion into the East came another devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, and from this, it has been remarked that it was Mary brought Joseph before the world, and Joseph brought Jesus. The children of Our Lady of Mount Carmel introduced into Europe devotion to St. Joseph, and devotion to St. Joseph was followed by devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. This was the order of events. In 1208 Blessed Juliana had her wonderful vision, which moved Urban IV. to establish the feast of the Blessed Sacrament. The Fourth Council of Lateran declared that in the Holy Eucharist "the bread is transsubstantiated into the body of Christ, and the wine into His blood by divine power."

Honorius III. ascended the pontifical throne in 1216, and during his pontificate the Carmelites passed into Europe, introducing devotion to St. Joseph, and Honorius III. was commanded by Our Blessed Lady in a vision to recognize and solemnly to approve them. And, half a century had not gone by, when the solemn office and feast of the Blessed Sacrament were established, and devotion to our Divine Lord and His earthly guardian had spread through the Universal Western Church. A century later the greatest doctors of the Church exerted all their learning and eloquence to propagate this devotion to St. Joseph. Albert Magnus, the teacher of St. Thomas, composed an office in his honor; before his time, another Dominican, Brother Bartholomew of Trent, had written his biography. In 1416, whilst the Council of Constance was sitting, and the legates of the Holy See, twenty cardinals, two hundred bishops, and all the doctors and theologians of the Church were earnestly debating the best means to stem the torrent of corruption that was devastating the Church, Gerson, the Chancellor of the University of Paris, appeared before the fathers, and suggested devotion to St. Joseph as the only and the most effectual remedy for the evil, because, he argued, as St. Joseph was the guardian of Christ, so is he the guardian of the mystical body of Christ, and he whom Christ obeyed on earth, still retains an authority of affection over Christ in heaven, and thus his wishes, like the wishes of Mary, are commands, and his intercession is all-powerful. His words were received as the words of one who had a mission from heaven, and as devotion to St. Joseph spread in the Church the troubles of the Church, one by one, disappeared. In less than a year perfect peace was restored; the distractions of schisms and discussions ceased, and under the mild patronage of St. Joseph the ever-suffering Church had its history of persecution broken by a momentary peace, which she seldom and only at rare intervals enjoys.

Time went on, and now it was not a passing schism, but the most fearful heresy that desolated the Church; it was not a spark of hell-fire, but an eruption; but devotion to St. Joseph lived and was fostered in the Church by the greatest of his devoted clients, St. Teresa, and when the nations of Europe rejected Christ by rejecting His Church, the Child and His fosterfather passed away into heathen lands, and as at the passing of the Child in his father's arms into Egypt, the idols trembled and fell; so heathenism disappeared where Jesus and Joseph were preached by their priests,

and whole kingdoms were evangelized and won over to God. "The contemplative," says Father Faber, "took up the devotion, and fed upon it; the active laid hold of it, and nursed the sick, and fed the hungry in its name. The working people fastened upon it; for both the saint and the devotion were of them. The young were drawn to it, and it made them pure; the aged rested on it, for it made them peaceful. St. Sulpice took it up, and it became the spirit of the secular clergy; and when the great Society of Jesus had taken refuge in the Sacred Heart, and the fathers of the Sacred Heart were keeping their lamps burning ready for the resurrection of the society, devotion to St. Joseph was their stay and consolation, and they cast the seeds of a new devotion to the heart of Joseph, which will one day flourish and abound. So it gathered into itself orders and congregations, high and low, young and old, ecclesiastical and lay, schools and confraternities, hospitals, orphanages and penitentiaries, everywhere holding up Jesus, everywhere hand in hand with Mary, everywhere the refreshing shadow of the Eternal Father. Then when it had filled Europe with its odor, it went over the Atlantic, plunged into the umbrage of the backwoods, embraced all Canada, became a mighty missionary power, and tens of thousands of natives filled the forests and the rolling prairies at sundown with hymns to St. Joseph, "the praises of the fosterfather of our Lord."

Such is a brief outline, my brethren, of the history of this wonderful devotion. And such is the way that God has chosen to recompense the protector of Jesus and Mary. The hidden life of Nazareth is changed for the glory of heaven, and the worship of God's Church upon earth. The meek and lowly Joseph is patron of the Universal Church. So deep was his humility upon earth, that he seems to us to have been no more than the unconscious agent of the miracles of heaven, and he little knew that for the fulfilment of the high functions God had entrusted to him, his soul had been fitted with transcendent virtues; and that in after ages, learned doctors of the Church would study eagerly his life and his character, knowing well that in both they would discover traces of the spiritual omnipotent work of the Holy Spirit. He must have been completely unconscious of his sanctity during life; and now we have saints far advanced in the spiritual life, sitting at his feet to learn sanctity, for they know that he who on earth and in heaven is nearest to Christ is likeliest unto Christ and that to be like unto

Joseph is also to be like unto Jesus. Who was more humble and more hidden than the carpenter of Nazareth? Yet behold, the great wisdom of the Church does not separate him from those with whom he was associated in misery. But throughout the Church devotion to St. Joseph is spreading, laying hold of all hearts, and subduing them, not the hearts of the young, or the poor and the lowly, whose life is like to his, but even saints, as I have said, are happy to bring themselves under his sweet influence, and mighty schemes for the sanctification of souls are placed under his protection, and difficult problems are submitted to him for solution, and grave doctors have often appealed to the fosterfather of Jesus for guidance and assistance. It is recorded of a great living theologian that, oftentimes when burdened with anxious care, he has been seen to lay his head on the feet of St. Joseph as if appealing to the protector of our Divine Lord for light and strength to guard the mystic body of Christ, as Joseph guarded Jesus from His enemies on earth. Some time ago a great artist was in Rome. He received an order from the Vatican to paint a portrait of the Pope, and a picture of the proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. When an outline of the painting had been made, he took it to the Vatican for the Pope's approbation. Skilful though it was, he had great difficulty in grouping round the heavenly throne the many choirs of saints and angels. Throwing a quick glance over the sketch the Holy Father detected an omission. "And St. Joseph," said he, "where is he?" "I will put him there," said the artist, pointing to a group lost in clouds of light and glory. "Not so," said the Holy Father, "but," so laying his finger by the side of our Divine Lord, "you will put him there, for that is his place in heaven."

We have often been told, my brethren, that the best way to honor a saint is to imitate the virtues of the saints. I do not know which of St. Joseph's virtues I should put before you for imitation, but I think it will be appropriate for us to-day to imitate rather the life of Joseph, and to take upon ourselves that responsibility laid by the Eternal Father on St. Joseph that is guardianship of our Divine Lord. Now in an especial manner St. Joseph was the guardian of the Divine Infancy. It is only as a child that we ever see Jesus by the side of Joseph; only as an infant does He lie in the arms of Joseph. Now the Blessed Sacrament is the most perfect type of the infancy of our Lord, for it is in the Blessed Sacrament that

Jesus leads that retired, hidden and helpless life that He led as a child in Nazareth. Here then, is this Church transformed into Nazareth, Jesus, as hidden and helpless as there, and we, the Josephs and the Marys, the watchers and protectors of our hidden God. With what love and reverence did not Joseph guard his treasure. How grateful he felt to God for the great privilege that was extended to him. How often did he look into himself, asking his humility, why he had been chosen out of thousands. With what looks of tender love did he not gaze upon the face of the Divine Child. And this untiringly. From the moment he saw Jesus lying in the arms of His mother in Bethlehem till he closed his eyes on earth and opened them to the Beatific Vision in heaven, never did Joseph relax his care, never for an instant did his love grow cold, never did his interest wane, never did his reverence for Jesus abate. These must be our feelings, too, my brethren, in the day and in the watches of the night. The same treasure is confided to us that was confided to Joseph. Let our love be as great; let our diligence be as unremitting. It was the lifelong labor of Joseph, and he did not weary of it, because it was a labor of love to him. The years of infancy, the years of boyhood, the years of riper life went by, but Joseph was unwearied in his loving devotion for Jesus, and this merited for him the great consolation of having Jesus and Mary with him at the moment of his death, and the happiness of looking into the face of his Saviour as he passed to the throne of God to receive the reward of his love and devotion—eternal life. May we, by our love and our devotion to Christ, merit the same consolation and the same reward.

PASSION SUNDAY.

PASSIONTIDE.

BY THE REV. THOMAS F. BURKE, C.S.P.

"But Christ, being come an high priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hand, that is not of this creation; neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption."—Epistle of the day.

SYNOPSIS.—1. *At the beginning of Passiontide, it is well to consider the Passion of our Blessed Saviour, not in detail, but in the general fact and its motive.* 2. *The fact is that by His Passion Christ has redeemed us; He has become our Owner. The need of redemption. Every sacrifice has its reward. The reward of Christ's sacrifice is in the possession of the human race.* 3. *The redemption was superabundant. The necessity of satisfaction would not have demanded so much. In His Passion Christ reveals in a special way the enormity of sin. But He chose to suffer so much that He might show us, above all, His great love.* 4. *One condition demanded of us that we may share in the redemption, that is, our obedience.*

1. To-day, my dear brethren, the Church begins that season, extending over two weeks, which is known as Passiontide. During this time the greatest and most vital events in the life of our Blessed Lord will be recalled vividly and in detail to our minds. To-day, however, it is well for us to consider the general object of His passion, apart from its circumstances. We shall behold Him entering Jerusalem in triumph amid the plaudits of an approving populace; we shall see Him seated with His apostles at the last supper, bequeathing His greatest legacy of love; we shall see Him prostrate in grief, taken prisoner by His enemies, scourged and spat upon, mocked and crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross; but to-day, before entering upon this time of sorrow, let us consider what has been accomplished by all this suffering, namely, the redemption of man. By His Passion and death, Christ, the High Priest, has become our owner. He has redeemed us, and thus He has shown His love.

2. He has redeemed us. "You are bought with a great price," says the apostle. That price was the blood of Jesus Christ; it was a death of ignominy; it was the agony, the torture, the heart-break-

ing of a God-man. The glory of it all is that we were bought—even at this great price.

The Redemption stands as the central act in the history of the world. As the traveller gazes across the plains and lesser heights to the dim figure of the lofty summit that once he hopes to reach, so had the ages gazed longingly in the visions of the prophets to the summit of Calvary; and since that day the Christian peoples have gazed lovingly back to the same spot and they have drunk of the pure streams that flow from this mountain of God. "Being consummated, he became to all who obey the cause of salvation" (Heb. v. 9).

With the shedding of His blood began Christ's kingdom. By that act He received the title of ownership. He became the King of all, and if the history of past ages reveals the great fact that nations have prospered in proportion to the service they have rendered to Him; no less is it plain that the welfare of man to-day depends upon the realization of the truth that we are Christ's people; that we belong to Him; that He is our Lord, our Master, and our King.

We belong to Him because He has redeemed us; He has bought us back. That race to which, in its creation, God had given the great gift of perfect liberty; which had been consecrated to God's service, in that its members were formed in His image and likeness; that race which had been placed on trial and probation with abundant supernatural helps to work out its destiny; that race which had proved itself unfaithful to the trust imparted, which had turned away from God, which, in the opposition of its will, had uttered the rebel words, "I will not obey; I will not serve;" which had thus forfeited its inheritance and its right to the kingdom of heaven; that race made of God and loved of God is to be regenerated, redeemed by the sacrifice of the blood of the God-man.

For every act of sacrifice there is a reward. Behold the soldier fighting for his native land upon the field of battle. The onrush of the enemy, the flash of fire and sword, the thunder of the mighty hosts, the cries of the wounded and the dying, the uplifted faces of the dead, of those that he loved—these have no terrors for him in that moment. He fights, and fights unto the death. Willingly he makes the sacrifice, dying content to know that, even though victory rest not upon the banners of his comrades, he has fought for a noble principle and left a legacy of bravery unto his children. These he has purchased by his death.

Behold the martyr dying for his faith. His persecutors may summon all the tortures at their command; they do not swerve him from his steadfastness. Amidst all he stands undismayed. The stake, the rack, the sword, the wild beast may, for the moment terrify, but, strengthened by faith and the consciousness of God's presence, he meets death willingly, bravely, lovingly, knowing that the heavens will open and he will be received into the bosom of the God for whom he dies. This reward he has purchased by his death.

Behold Jesus Christ, God and Man, coming upon earth, living a life of sorrow and affliction. Behold Him, mocked, derided, and insulted; behold Him bowed to earth in an agony of blood; behold Him scourged until His precious blood flowed upon the ground; behold Him crowned with thorns until the crown was dyed with His sacred blood; behold Him fastened to the cross as the cruel nails drink of His blood; behold Him pierced by the soldier's lance as His heart's dearest blood bursts forth from its prison. Behold Him clothed in blood-red; one who has trodden the winepress alone. Behold Him, "as it were, a leper and as one struck by God and afflicted." What is His reward? For what has He paid this price? He has paid it for the human race. "He was bruised for our iniquities; he was wounded for our sins." "He appeared for the destruction of sin by sacrifice of himself." "When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son." "We were bought with a great price."

3. This redemption was, we may say, superabundant. The necessity for satisfaction accounts for our Lord's sufferings to a degree, but it does not account for this excess of sufferings, for the outpouring of His soul in sorrow. The slightest pain undergone by a God-man would have been sufficient to atone for the crimes of the human race; the least sorrow, borne by a person divine as well as human would have appeased the offended majesty of God.

In rendering satisfaction thus, the passion of our Lord reveals to us also the enormity of sin. What an evil that must be for which God would suffer at all! What an evil to repair which God would allow His only begotten Son to subject Himself to such a death. The enormity of sin stands revealed in Christ's sufferings. But why should our Lord have chosen such a way to impress this truth upon us? In the dictates of conscience, by the light of reason, through direct supernatural revelations, in the voices of the prophets, in the proclamation of His all-holy law, His sovereign will, God had al-

ready told us the nature of sin. These were the appeals of justice. The cross is the appeal of love. Such was the motive that impelled Him to show us sin in its awful hideousness, that we, face to face with the reality, taught by the suffering that sin caused Him, might learn to escape from the one thing which, in its essence, is hatred of God, and by thus escaping enter into union with Him.

His all-powerful love, however, did not permit Him to stop at what was necessary for man's ransom, at what even was necessary for man's instruction; rather it urged Him on to conquer human souls by weapons hitherto unappreciated by the human mind. So His whole life was a life of affliction. He was a man of sorrows. Thus does our Lord in His Passion choose to win our love. It is His delight to be with the children of men, but, more than that, He who was man as well as God, has united Himself to us by the most intimate and holiest bond of sympathy, that is, the bond of suffering. There is nothing truer and deeper in human nature than the sympathy aroused by suffering. No friendship is stronger than that founded in affliction; no friendship has been truly tested until it has been tried in the fiery furnace of sorrow. When does our soul more forget the things of this world, its petty joys and struggles; when does it more realize that there is, within itself, a nobility almost divine than when beside the bed of suffering it likewise suffers with the afflicted one; than when, as the pall of death creeps over the face of a loved one, it would, if it could, burst the chains of life and escape with the parting soul on its journey into eternity? So Christ, knowing human nature, chose the way of pain to win us. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto myself." He might have chosen other means, but so strong was His desire that He chose the most compelling way, the way best calculated to knit us more closely to Himself. The Psalmist sang: "Thou art my God, because thou hast no need of my goods." Yes, this is the voice of strict justice. God has no need of us or ours. But the voice of love speaks in the Passion of Christ. Jesus would then seem to say to each soul, "Yes, I do need thee. With a burning desire do I long for thee. My heart will not be satisfied until thou comest to me. See what I have done, what I have suffered that thou mayst know how deeply and how strongly I love thee. I love thee as a mother loves her firstborn." "Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee." His is a love that

surpasses all affection; His is a love greater than which the world has not known, because the suffering that bears witness to that love is the greatest man has ever undergone.

4. One condition is demanded of us that the Passion of Jesus Christ may be profitable to our souls, that is, our obedience, our service, our acknowledgment of His dominion, of His right to reign. "Being consummated he became to all who obey the cause of salvation." It is a deeper recognition of this supreme, this divine ownership of love that the world needs to-day. This great and fundamental truth of man's redemption by Jesus Christ, the act of a Divine Person, whereby the soul of man can enter into salvation; this, together with those truths necessarily implied in such an act, man's supernatural destiny, his fall from original justice and his punishment; his regeneration through Christ and the necessity of cooperation with Christ; these can give us much of the meaning of life, which, without these, remains a mystery.

If any man admit that Christ is God, and that He paid in His blood the price of our redemption, he can not look upon religion as a matter of indifference. To know spiritual truths in the light of Christ's teaching; to practise morality as inculcated in Christ's commands; to live the law of love as Christ established it; these are the ways that lead unto eternal life; these are the acts of loving obedience whereby we acknowledge the ownership of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. To-day many love Jesus, but alas, many also reject Him. They say: Human nature is sufficient; we do not need His religion; human life and the world, with its pleasures, its interests, its cares, its comforts, its riches, these are enough for us. True, in most instances, they know not what they do, but can the world afford to deride Him and reject Him? Can the world trifle with the love of God, the love of a God who hath loved even unto death? No; and for this reason it is written that love is more to be feared than justice, and that we should beware rather of the wrath of the lamb than of the lion. To this God, to Jesus Christ, who has come into the world; who has endured inconceivable sufferings and who asks in return a little affection, no human being can afford to say: "I know Thee not."

It is our duty then, my dear brethren, to enter upon this Passion-tide in the spirit of the Church; to put on the vesture of penance and sorrow, and with hearts of love, to accompany our Blessed Saviour in His hours of trial. We must again realize, as far as we

can, the first Passiontide ; we must go back in spirit to the time when the sacrifice was consummated ; we must, by following the beautiful services of the Church at this season, make the scenes of old live again in our minds. Go with Christ upon the journey of death. Enter into the supper-room and witness there the unfathomable depths of His love ; go out into the night and follow Him to the garden of Gethsemani, to see Him bowed to the earth in a grief such as no other has known ; behold Him betrayed by the kiss of one whom He calls by the name of friend ; and then, if it be possible, follow Him through the trials, and the physical sufferings, and the anguish of heart, and the wounding of the soul ; and the bitterness of desertion ; and the desolateness of it all, until He is fastened to the cruel bed of death.

Throughout all this time, remember the reason, the motive that urged upon His divine heart all these expressions of His love for man. Recall that St. Paul says that " Our Saviour having joy set before him endured the cross." Look into your inmost soul, into the depths of your heart and ask yourself what could possibly be the joy amid all the anguish and bitterness and woe. And if it be given to you to penetrate in the least the mysteries of heaven, you will find that the joy that came to our Saviour, that was the one consolation in all his trials, was the knowledge that because of His Passion, some would be led to love Him the more. Among these, loved and loving ones, stand and pledge to your suffering Lord and Saviour all the devotion of your mind and heart and soul. Say to Him : " My mind doth crave for the knowledge that is above all earthly wisdom, and I find that knowledge in the cross. My will doth desire the good, and in Thee hanging upon the cross I learn what is supreme goodness. My soul doth long for the giving of itself in loving service, and in all Thy sufferings, in Thy Passion and death, I receive the strength and grace to profess my allegiance to Thee, O Christ, forever."

EASTER SUNDAY.
LOYALTY TO CHRIST.

BY THE REV. P. C. YORKE.

SYNOPSIS.—*This is the day of Christ's triumph. Man is a social animal, therefore he needs government, and government supposes a leader, and a leader demands loyalty. In Church, Christ is our leader; we must be loyal to Him and rejoice in His triumph. It was a triumph over death and is the earnest of our victory over the grave.*

MY DEAR BRETHREN: When victorious generals return from their wars it is the custom for their nations to give them a triumph. They come in state into their country or city and all the people turn out to do them honor. It is the culmination of their campaign, the reward of their skill and valor. From the days of Rome to our own day the triumphs of great captains have been considered the height of earthly ambition—the cap and crown of earthly glory.

To-day we celebrate the triumph of the great Captain of our Salvation, Jesus Christ. Year by year on Easter Sunday the whole Christian world comes together to rejoice in the victory of Christ. He has gone through the valley of the shadow of death, He has broken the bars of the prison of hell, He has led captivity captive, and as He comes laden with the spoils of death, His people pour out to greet Him with the cry, “Resurrexit sicut dixit,” “He hath risen, as He said. Alleluia.”

It is a constant fact in human history, dear brethren, that men need a leader. In the first place man is a social animal. From the beginning we find him organized in clans, tribes, towns, states, nations. Even within the body politic he forms clubs, societies, factions, parties. Philosophers may discover the evils of such associations and moralize on them, but human nature is too strong for philosophy. Theoretically we may admire the stern temper of those who are able to stand alone, to think for themselves, and to remain masters of their own actions; practically we find that no man is sufficient unto himself. We are born to the ranks, children of the regiment. No matter what banner we follow, we find ourselves in some state, in some party. If perchance we move our ancient seats we incorporate ourselves at once into some other nation, and we set at learning the watchwords of some other faction.

Now in the second place every society must have a head; every army must have a general. Government is necessary if the society is to be preserved; leadership alone can keep the army from disintegration. It matters little in the scheme of human affairs how the leader is provided. He may be born to the office, he may seize it by force, he may be chosen to it by the suffrages of his people. This much is certain, the position is rooted in the necessities of things, and where men are organized they must have some captain to direct the organization.

Again, in the third place, as the king or president acts for the community, he must have the loyal support and obedience of the community. There is no government so absolute that it can exist against popular opinion. Where there is no loyalty there can be no leadership. A ruler may rule for a time by fear and force, but if his people are not reconciled to him, go he must. In the last analysis the Czar of all the Russias holds his position by the same tenure as the President of the United States.

Now what is true in civil affairs is to a great extent true in religion. God does not deal with each one of us directly in the sense that He communicates to the individual a scheme of belief and conduct. When Christ came upon earth He did not try to visit every country or to speak to every man face to face. The efforts of His public life were directed to the training and confirmation of the apostles and the foundation of a society which would do His work when He had ascended to the Father. The Church, therefore, responds to the human need for society. We are all commanded to belong to it, to hear its voice, and to obey. It is the means by which we are put in line for salvation. We have indeed our own individual, personal work to do, just as the traveler who is on the right road must himself move on if he is to reach his destination. The Church is the road, and besides this road there is none other by which men may reach their end.

The Church being a society must have a head. The visible Church on earth has as its leader the successor of St. Peter, the Bishop of Rome. But the Pope rules because he is the Vicar of Christ. The invisible head of the Church, of the Church in heaven, of the Church in purgatory, of the Church on earth is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is our King, we are His subjects. He is our Captain, we are His soldiers. He is our Leader, we are His disciples.

If then the safety and permanency of an earthly government de-

mands loyalty, how much more loyal are we bound to be to our King and Saviour! Men have thought it little to sacrifice their fortunes in the cause of their lawful sovereign, and it is written in the wisdom of every nation that it is sweet and seemly to die for the fatherland. Christ has higher claims on us. It is a question not of our bodies, but of our souls; it is a question not of a few years of life, but of the everlasting years of God; it is a question not of an earthly fatherland that soon devours its children, but of that sweet country, the heavenly city of Jerusalem, the blessed vision of peace, where God shall wipe away all tears and there shall be no more death nor sorrow nor pain.

And as in civil affairs, loyalty becomes the more intensified because of the personal worth and gallantry of the leader, so it is with us. There has never been such a right royal prince, never so tender a master, never so brave a knight as our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence it is that the history of the Church has been so full of examples of loyalty to His person. When the apostles first went out they went as His martyrs or witnesses. For love of Him they testified before kings and princes, in the synagogues of the Jews, in the assemblies of the pagans. They were asked only one thing by their persecutors, and that was to deny Christ. It seemed a little thing to the godless heathen to say but one word against a man who had died a felon's death. Yet sooner than say that word they endured all things, having trial of mockeries and stripes of bonds and prisons. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword—they of whom the world was not worthy. Who does not feel a thrill of exultation at that scene in the Asian theatre, even though he looks at it through the mists of seventeen centuries, where the aged Polycarp stands before the proconsul to give an account of the faith that is in him? For days the soldiers had been hunting him down, and when at last he was betrayed by one of his own they marveled, saying, "Why so much effort to take so venerable a man?" And now he is at the judgment seat and the whole stadium is crowded with the heathen crying out for his blood. Then the proconsul, moved with pity for his gray hairs, says to him, "Swear, and I will set thee at liberty; reproach Christ." Back came the noble answer that even at this day stirs our blood: "Fourscore and six years have I served Him, and He hath never done me an injury. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?"

It is this feeling of love and loyalty that is uppermost in our

minds now, dear brethren, when we celebrate the victory of our King. This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein. The war was hard, and the end seemed doubtful. Against him were ranged not only the rebel spirits and the cohorts of human iniquity, but the very men He had chosen to help Him betrayed Him and forsook Him. Who would have thought of Him as a conqueror that Christmas as He lay in the manger or when He was carried away in haste into Egypt to escape the wrath of the cruel king? Who would have considered Him the victorious champion that night in the garden when His enemies bound Him and His disciples fled away? Who would have recognized Him as the Great King of Heaven and Earth as He sat in the courtyard clad in the purple robe with the crown of thorns on His head, and a reed, the sceptre of His majesty, in His hand? Who would have adored Him as God when, with pierced hands and feet and opened side He reigned from the cross over the world which He had redeemed with His blood?

But he snatched victory from the very jaws of death. They laid Him in the tomb, they sealed the door, they set the guards, they went their way rejoicing that they had vanquished Him at last. But in His own good time He rose like a giant refreshed with sleep; He came forth from the tomb and the earth trembled before Him. Death was vanquished, its victory broken, its sting destroyed.

Never in the history of mankind was there such a battle,

“Whilst in strange and awful strife
Met together Death and Life.”

And never was there such a conqueror. Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon filled the world with their renown. They went from land to land, shattering armies, overthrowing dynasties, disposing of kingdoms and sighing that there were no more worlds to conquer. But one day there came a mightier than they. Death knocked at their door, and at his call, like the meanest of their subjects, they rose and followed him. But there is one conqueror who has put death under His feet—Our Lord Jesus Christ—the first fruits of them that sleep. Apparently conquered, he invaded the kingdom of the dead and set free the spirits that were in prison and returned to proclaim that the enemy before whom all mankind trembled had lost his power. “I will deliver them out of the hand of death, I will redeem them from the grave: O Death, I will be thy death, O Grave, I will be thy destruction.” “Death is swallowed up in victory; O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?”

Wherefore to-day, dear brethren, it is meet that we should rejoice in the victory of our Lord and King. His resurrection is the promise of ours. He triumphed not for Himself alone, but that we too might triumph over the grave. "If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of His spirit that dwelleth in you." Relying on this blessed hope and promise, let us animate ourselves to deeper loyalty and more willing service. At this season the Church commands us to approach the Holy Table in order to partake of that food which is the pledge that we shall not see corruption forever. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day." Let us not treat the precept lightly. We owe too much to our Lord thus to slight the voice of His Church. Let us show our gratitude and loyalty not by words only, but by deeds. In this way alone can we prove that we are really His followers, for they have no claim to share His triumph who are not willing to obey His commands.

LOW SUNDAY.

THE LIGHT OF THE RISEN LORD.

BY DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B., B.A. (OXON).

"The Lord hath risen indeed. Alleluia."

SYNOPSIS.—The coming of Easter, startling in its suddenness, yet there are gradations. An Alpine sunrise—(a) So the light of the risen Lord enlightened the mountain peaks. (b) Mary. (c) Magdalen and John types of the penitent and virginal life. (d) Peter after his denial. His testimony accepted by all. (e) Except St. Thomas, who had separated himself from his brethren. Not so much skeptical as desponding. (f) He has appeared also to us. (g) Though some have hid themselves from Him, like Thomas, till to-day.

Introduction.—The Easter Alleluias ring in our hearts year by year with a new joyousness and a new beauty. Year by year as we watch by the cross we learn fresh lessons from the adorable Passion of the Son of God; and year by year the gloom changes into joy with a suddenness which is positively startling, just as at the Mass on Easter eve the purple veils fall from the sacred images and the altars in our churches.

And yet there is a certain gradation in this change, a dawning of this glory and joy, sudden though it be. We are as one standing on some Alpine peak to see the sunrise. He has mounted in the darkness and the gloom of night, and the keen, cold air makes him shiver as he stands waiting for nature's great pageant to unfold itself.

At first all is dark. And then in the east there appear swift heralds of the dawn, faint, rosy streaks upon a lilac sky, and lo! one snowy mountain peak has flushed rose-red all of an instant—a glory to behold—and then the golden fingers of the dawn tip peak after peak with fire until the whole heaven is aflame. Waves of crimson and gold surge across the heavens, and at last there appears the great orb in all its splendor, “coming forth as a bridegroom out of the bridechamber, rejoicing as a giant to run his course,” and at the touch of his rays the earth awakes, the birds begin their morning hymn of praise, and as he rises majestically above the mountain tops, the light of a new day invades the valleys, touching the fields with gold and chasing far away the shadows of the night.

(a) And so it was on the first Easter day. The Sun of Justice had set in gloom unparalleled, in a red sea of blood, but on the Friday evening. And very early on the Sunday morning He rose again majestic and beautiful beyond all human thought, rose, never again to set, henceforth for ever to be the fadeless light of earth and heaven.

But not all at once did the shadows flee away and His light reach and gladden the hearts of those who most had mourned His loss.

(b) At first, indeed, but one virgin peak was embraced by His light and gladdened by His caress. To Mary—while John and Magdalen, Joseph and Nicodemus, Peter and Veronica were weeping—to Mary alone He came, and changed her sorrow into joy. Who shall describe or paint the ecstasy of that meeting?

It would need an inspired pen, and the Holy Ghost has willed to draw a veil over a scene so unspeakably sacred. Mary alone was expecting Him; on Easter eve her faith alone remained undimmed; in her heart alone were stored those words of His—in that heart of hers where all His actions and His words were ever stored—“And the third day he shall rise again.”

May we not imagine our dear Lady during that weary night crying out in the intensity of her supplication in the words of Holy Writ: “O Lord my God, let the soul of this child, I beseech thee, return to his body”? And perchance the herald angel of the annunciation,

Gabriel, "the strength of God," was sent as of old to Daniel to console her with the message: "From the beginning of thy prayers the word came forth. . . . Behold thy son liveth."

And then as she waited there came borne on the air the songs of angels and the rustling of many wings. And she lifted up her eyes and saw a vision such as John saw in Patmos: "A man clothed in linen, and his loins were girded with the finest gold, and his body was like the chrysolite, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as a burning lamp, and his arms and all downward, even to the feet, like in appearance to glittering brass."

And those arms were stretched out to embrace her, and in those eyes was a look of infinite tenderness and infinite love, and there rushed over her soul a wave of joy so great that she could not bear it, and she lay in His arms as one dead. It is true that she had stood, that poor, brave mother, by the cross on Calvary all through His bitter Passion without fainting, but we can not be surprised if (as was revealed to St. Teresa) the joy of this meeting was so intense that she fainted away in His arms. But when she could speak again, we can imagine her crying over and over again, as she held Him fast to her breast: "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy; thou hast cut off my sackcloth and hast compassed me with gladness. O Lord my God, I will give praise to thee forever. For this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

To heal His mother's broken heart was the first impulse of the loving Heart of her Risen Son; indeed, we may believe with St. Bonaventure, that it was for her sake that He prevented the night watches and rose long before the morning sun had dawned.

Yes, the first joy of Easter belongs to Mary, and to her alone; and well may we sing our *Regina coeli laetare* all this blessed Paschaltide.

(c) And then the light strikes lower peaks, but still far above the level of the plain. Magdalen and John, types of the penitent and the virginal life. How sweetly did the tender heart of Jesus arrange that His first recorded appearance should be to a penitent! What a joy, what a consolation to those of us who have sobbed out our hearts in the tribunal of Penance during Passioutide, who have learned from the cross to estimate the hideous blackness of our guilt! To show how freely and how lovingly He welcomes the penitent home, He will let His Resurrection light fall first on her. Henceforth the sinner of Magdala shall be the apostle of the Resur-

rection, and holy Church on her feast shall ever sing the *Credo* in honor of one who first announced even in the Vicar of Christ the glad tidings of the Resurrection morn.

And then John, the type of those most blessed ones who have kept their baptismal innocence unspotted from the world. "He saw and believed." The pure heart sees deepest into the things of God. Ah, dear brethren, now that we are risen with Christ, let us leave our dead selves, our dead sins, in the tomb with the grave clothes, and strive after the grace of purity of heart.

(d) Love, penitence, purity, such are the mountain peaks on which the Sun of Justice has arisen. Such the graces which Jesus loves to welcome and to bless at Eastertide. But not these alone—now doth His light spread from soul to soul, from peak to peak; the day hath dawned and the shadows flee away. Now after Magdalen and the holy women it is the turn of Peter.

Peter, on that fatal night when he had denied his Lord, and when the mild reproachful gaze of Jesus had pierced him to the heart, "went out and wept bitterly." And all Good Friday, we are told by St. Bonaventure, he wept his crime. His eyes became rivers of water and his heart was all but broken with despair. But on that evening, when the dread sacrifice of Calvary had been consummated, and the faithful few were gathered around Mary in the Coenaculum, at the door were heard soft knockings as of one who almost feared to be answered. And John going forth found Peter weeping in the darkness. And he brought him in tenderly and led him to Mary, and there at the mother's feet he sobbed out his piteous confession. And Mary then, as ever the refuge of sinners, comforted him with certain hope of pardon, saved him from despair, and poured into his wounded soul the balm of heavenly peace. Did she perhaps also plead for him when her Jesus came to her so early on Easter morn? Certain it is that one of our risen Saviour's first appearances is to the heartbroken apostle.

And it was then, and not till then, observe, when He had thus, in merciful tenderness, visited Peter, heard his confession, and dried his tears, that the Sun shines forth in all his might and glory. The shadows flee away and the light shines into the lowest valleys, for the Prince of the Apostles has given his testimony, and at his voice all incredulity vanishes. "The Lord hath risen indeed," is the greeting of the apostles to the disciples at Emmaus; "the Lord hath risen indeed; there is no more room for doubt, for he hath appeared unto Simon."

(e) I said there was no more room for doubt. Nor was there to those who remained associated in the common fellowship, united to their head. But there was one who had separated himself from the apostolic communion, and who therefore "was not there when Jesus came." Even the voice of Peter, confirmed as it was by the testimony of his brethren, brought no conviction to the desponding heart of Thomas.

Not that it would seem that St. Thomas was naturally a skeptic, although he is often quoted as the prototype and pattern of skeptics. When once convinced, his rapturous confession, as we read in to-day's Gospel, soared to a height of faith and confidence unsurpassed by any. His unbelief seems to have sprung from despondency. He loved our Lord most dearly, but he was apt to take the gloomy view of things. Once when his Master announced his intention of going to Bethany to raise Lazarus from "sleep," Thomas cried out at once to his colleagues, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." And now our Lord was dead, and Thomas felt with bitter shame and grief that at the moment of trial he had failed, had deserted the Master, not died with Him. The excited assertions of the holy women that they had seen the victim of Calvary alive and glorified on Easter morn seemed to him mere idle tales. Even the graver testimony of his apostolic brethren can not convince him. He must see for himself; nay, he must touch and handle, before he will believe that there is yet joy for him in this life and hope for that to come. And so to-day, on the Octave of Easter, when for the rest the sun has been shining in all its splendor for seven glorious days, the soul of Thomas is still plunged in darkness and gloom. It is as it were a deep cavern into which the sun's rays can only penetrate at noonday. But now his turn, too, has come.

St. Augustine reminds us that we owe more to the unbelief of St. Thomas than to the livelier faith of all the rest, for he has left us no loophole for incredulity or doubt as to the great central truth of our most holy faith; and his glorious confession rings to-day like a clarion through the length and breadth of Christendom calling men to fall down in adoration before our risen Lord—"My Lord and my God!"

(f) For we, too, dear brethren, have our share in the joy of St. Thomas. To us also during these thrice blessed days has the risen Saviour appeared in His beauty. We have heard the sweetness of

His Easter greeting thrilling through our hearts. *Pax vobis*, "Peace be to you," he has whispered in the still rapture of our Paschal communion. The ceremonies of Easter eve were but anticipations of the joy that was to come. They recall those first appearances to Mary and to Magdalen before the break of day. He has risen indeed, and the Alleluias resound, but the joy is not complete, for He has not yet appeared to us; we have not seen Him; we have not kissed His feet. But on Easter morn He comes even to us. "Joy is come upon me from the Holy One. I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in God, my Jesus."

(g) But perhaps there are those of us, who, like Thomas, separated ourselves from the fellowship of the apostles. They gave way to despondency and cowardice. The gracious invitation of Jesus, "Come unto me and be enlightened," has sounded in their ears, but they refused to believe that it was meant for them. Their sins had been so great, they had so shamefully deserted their Lord, they had been so ungrateful for all His love. It was not possible that there was hope for them, that He would pardon them as He had pardoned Magdalen and Peter. So they persuaded themselves, and remained wilfully outside in the darkness while their brethren were sunning themselves in the Paschal light. But to-day at least the summons has come with an imperative force that can not be denied. If they would belong to the company of Jesus at all, they must come and join themselves to the communion of the faithful to-day. Happy indeed are those of them who have had grace to obey. Happy you who, at the eleventh hour, have found your Risen Lord in the midst of His own. You have knelt at His feet, and looked up into His eyes, so reproachful in their yearning love, and at the sight of those great wounds inflicted by man's sin, you have cried out in love and self-abasement, "My Lord and my God!"

Thus has the light of the Sun of Justice enlightened the darkness, even of those who for a while, it may be, wilfully hid themselves from His lifegiving beams. Thus has He poured His joy and peace into the hearts of all who love and look for Him. May His peace abide with you, my brethren, and reign ever in your hearts!

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE ALLEGORY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR DEVINE, C.P.

"I am the Good Shepherd."—John x. 11.

SYNOPSIS.—*The Good Shepherd, the symbol of Christ—His image and the title in which all other titles meet, Priest, King, Prophet. The meaning of the allegory or parable explained. The parable teaches three lessons:*

I. A lesson of pastoral vigilance. 1. The knowledge of the flock. 2. The care of the flock.

II. The duties of the people toward their pastors. 1. They have to know Christ the Good Shepherd with love and reverence. 2. They have to know His representatives. (a) This they can do by the text which Christ Himself lays down: (b) The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep. 3. They have to assist their pastors especially by corresponding to their ministrations and by vigilance and wakefulness in the service of God.

III. Duties to those outside the Church according to the words of our Saviour: "And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." 1. What has been done and what is being done for the conversion of those outside the Visible Church. 2. They ought to do something more themselves by corresponding to the graces offered them. The necessity for all to be vigilant and to admit into their hearts the King of Glory according to His own loving words: "Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

The allegory of the Good Shepherd was spoken by our Divine Saviour in Jerusalem near the temple in the October of the third year of His public ministry. "The words have taken so deep a hold of the hearts of his people, that from the beginning they passed into a common title for their exalted Head. The Good Shepherd was the symbol under which, in times of persecution, His presence was shadowed forth. It was sculptured on the walls of sepulchres and catacombs; it was painted in upper chambers and oratories; it was traced upon their sacred books; it was graven on the vessels of the altar. The image of the Good Shepherd has expressed, as in a parable, all their deepest affections, fondest musings, most docile obedience, most devoted trust. It is a title in which all other titles meet; in the light of which they blind and lose themselves. Priest, King, Prophet, Saviour, and Guide are all summed up in this one more than royal, paternal, saving name. It recalls in one word all the

mercies and loving kindness of God to His people of old, when the Shepherd of Israel made His own people "to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock" (Manning). There is one other beautiful image of the Gospel of St. John which is commonly found side by side with that of the Good Shepherd, namely, the Vine. The Good Shepherd and the true Vine are figures of Christ dear to all Christians and of which they are never weary.

Of this allegory or parable we may first of all give a short explanation. The Good Shepherd, and also the door, signify Christ; the fold is the Church; the thieves and robbers are false guides; the hirelings, such ministers as seek their own profit and gain rather than the welfare of the flock committed to their care; the wolves are false teachers, who, without real ordination, or jurisdiction, or mission, assume the duties of pastors and priests, and often appear in sheep's clothing; other sheep signify those outside the visible Church who are yet to be sought after, and, so far as is possible, to be brought into the one true fold of Christ.

The allegory suggests at once to our minds a threefold consideration: 1. A lesson of pastoral vigilance. 2. The duties of the faithful toward their pastors. 3. Our duties toward those who are outside the true Church, of whom our Saviour speaks when He says: "And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John x. 16).

I. A lesson of pastoral vigilance.

Our Divine Saviour in representing Himself as the Good Shepherd gives us to understand that He never forsakes His Church—He never fleeth away; that He knows His sheep; that He lays down His life for His sheep; that He seeks the lost sheep and leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness. In this way he proposes Himself as the model of all true pastors of souls, and He is especially their model in regard to pastoral vigilance, which consists in the knowledge and care of the flock. This vigilance, according to His teaching and example, must be general and particular; it must extend to the whole flock; to their common interest and welfare, and it must extend to every individual member of it.

1. The knowledge of the flock: "I know mine and mine know me." "And he calleth his own sheep by name." The pastor, therefore, should have a similar knowledge of those entrusted to his care, so as to be able to distinguish his own people, that is, those that belong to the true fold, from others who are yet strangers. He has

to know those that are sick and those that are in health, those that are weak and those that are strong, either as to their physical or spiritual state.

I am aware that in large towns it is not easy for a pastor to obtain this knowledge. Many do not appear in church; many are not entered in the parish books, as they do not present themselves for marriages or their children for baptism. He will not find all his children in the Catholic schools, as many parents, unfortunately, in spite of all the exhortations of priests and bishops and all the sacrifices they make to maintain efficient schools, send their children to public schools or Protestant schools. Then many change their abodes every year, and some every quarter, and these, for the most part never think of sending their addresses to the priest, or of making themselves known to him in any other way. How is he to know them? In this matter we can not expect inspiration or any spiritual intuition. There are only natural means available, and these are often exhausted, and yet, many escape the knowledge of the pastor, especially of the class of boarders or lodgers, and men engaged all day in work and who are only to be found at home at night.

2. The care of the flock. The care of the flock, according to the Divine model, involves many duties to which the pastors of souls have to attend. They must watch over the flock lest the thief come to steal, to kill, and to destroy, or lest the wolf come to scatter and to seize. They have to guard against the teachers of false doctrine who would insinuate themselves amongst the people, speaking of mutual love for one another and for "brother man" in order to draw them away from the unity of Christ's fold and to attract them to some new system of erroneous socialism, or to some one or other of the modern false theories of religion, all of which happen to be only old heresies under new names. They must watch against evil doers and scandal givers, those who lead the innocent astray and spread the pestilence of sin in a parish. It belongs also to the shepherd to feed the sheep. To withdraw them from nauseous and unwholesome pasture, namely, from such occupations, pursuits, amusements, and associations as are the occasions of sin; to warn the people of the dangers to which they are exposed from the dissemination and the reading of unhealthy literature. The people have to be nourished with the food of the word of God and led to the fountain of grace, namely, the holy sacraments. In a word, the pastor must guide the flock in the narrow way that leads to life. He must heal

the sick in soul, prevent discords, reconcile enemies, and never fail in the duty of paternal correction when this may be needed. These duties extend to all his people, to every rank and profession, to the rich and the poor, to young and old. The old are to be admonished to give good example to the young, and the young need very special attention, because of the special dangers to which they are exposed, and because of the habits acquired in youth.

II. The duties of the people toward their pastors.

The duties of pastors and people are mutual and reciprocal. As the pastors are to know their people, so the people ought to know their pastors. "I know mine and mine know me;" as the pastors should have care of the people, so the people should submit to their teaching and guidance, and correspond to and aid the efforts of their pastors.

It is their duty, in the first place and above all things, to know Christ, the Good Shepherd, and to know Him with love and reverence. Secondly, they have to know His representatives, those whom He has sent, those who have been consecrated by Holy Orders, to the priesthood of Jesus Christ; and to know them with love and reverence, for they, after Christ, and as His true ministers, are the divinely appointed shepherds of souls. Our Saviour uses strong expressions in referring to false teachers, to those who take upon themselves the office of preaching and teaching the Gospel without any authority from heaven, or any authority from His Church on earth. He calls them thieves and robbers, and He means the ravening wolves in sheep's clothing, who were in our Lord's time and are to-day the cause of great ruin to souls—who, as the Scripture says, devour widows' houses; who are full of ravening and wickedness, and who are, in truth, thieves and robbers, robbing God of those souls redeemed by His precious blood. He gives one test by which these may be known: "The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, whose own the sheep are not." The sheep are not his and he does not seek their good, but his own advantage and emoluments. Christ said of Himself: "I lay down my life for my sheep." And every one of His appointed shepherds is prepared to lay down his life for His sheep. Every true bishop and every true priest is bound to abide with his flock, especially in times of danger and persecution, unless he himself be personally sought for rather than the flock, or the flock itself forsake him; in such cases the pastor may fly, as did the Apostle, St. Athanasius and others. This test may be applied

any day and in our own locality. Take a case of a person dying or seriously ill of some contagious disease, say typhus fever, smallpox, diphtheria, or the like. I need not ask in which ecclesiastical system is the pastor bound to expose his life and to face even certain death. In case of Protestants and non-Catholics generally no sacraments are obligatory according to their system or doctrine in that awful moment, and without implying that their ministers would refuse to attend, I think that according to common sense considering all the good he could do, the pastor that would expose himself and others connected with him to the certain danger of disease and death would act very foolishly; and it would be wise for him to fly away or to keep away, for all the good he can do. He can as easily put up a prayer in his own house as at the bedside of the dying person. It is not so with Catholic priests, who are obliged to administer three sacraments to the dying Catholic, namely, Penance, Holy Eucharist, and Extreme Unction; and in the whole history of the Church it has never been known or said that they have failed in that hour of need, even at the risk of their lives, and very often with certain danger of death. There are few missionary priests many years in the mission before they have to go through experiences of this kind. These are the shepherds whom the people may know and distinguish from hirelings and from those whose own the sheep are not. These are the shepherds to whom the people owe love and reverence in return for that devotion by which they are always ready to lay down their lives for any member of their flocks. I have said that there are mutual and reciprocal duties and offices to be observed between the pastors and the people, and on that account the people should assist their pastors. This they can do in many ways. 1. By making themselves known to him, especially in large towns. How easy it is for Catholics, when they come into a parish or change their residence, to call on the priest and let him know. Why hide themselves from their best and their truest friend? It may be that, in some cases, they have grown negligent and do not care to become fervent; in other cases, some do not care to be known as Catholics in the midst of Protestants—it may injure their business; or there may be some other unworthy and mean motive. They know that the Church is poor, that the schools are in want, and they have no generous or charitable inclination to help. How sad to think that any who acknowledge Christ as the Shepherd and who know what the Church has done for them, and who know the sacrifices made by

priests and their fellow Catholics for them, and for their parents and their children, how sad, I say, that any such careless and indifferent Catholics are to be found in our midst. They are, I know, the exceptions, but they are the exceptions that are chiefly responsible for the leakage, of which there is so much reason to complain, and to prevent which the most strenuous efforts of bishops, priests, and faithful Catholics are required and are being exerted.

2. The people can aid their pastors by vigilance on their part, or wakefulness in the service of God, by receiving with proper disposition all their admonitions, by corresponding to their ministrations, and by fidelity to the grace of God, to prayer, and to the reception of the sacraments. "Love not sleep," says the wise man, "lest poverty oppress thee; open thy eyes, and be filled with bread" (Prov. xx. 13). From these words we have all to understand how, in this earthly pilgrimage of ours, we must not allow ourselves to be overpowered by spiritual sleep, but rather shake it off early, so as to provide ourselves with the heavenly refreshment that we need in so toilsome a journey. This refreshment is that which we receive in prayer, a thing which is always pleasing to God, but especially when addressed to Him very early in the day for our daily wants, so that ourselves and our actions may be consecrated each day to His service.

III. Duties to those outside the Church.

We may notice how kindly our Lord speaks of "other sheep." Sheep other than the Jewish people at that time and not belonging to the Jewish Synagogue. The reference is literally to be understood of the Gentiles. Christ was sent by the Father, "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles." His words now are prophetic, and regard the salvation of the Gentiles and the success of His Gospel. They contain also an argument, and a final one, for the unity of the Church established by our Saviour. He says, "And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

The words of Christ may apply, according to the divine intention, to those outside the fold of the Church, especially to those who are in good faith and in invincible ignorance; we know that it is the will of our Saviour that all these should hear His voice and that they should enter His fold, so that there may be one fold under one Shepherd. The question may occur to us to-day, What are we doing or what can we do for those outside the Church so that they may

know and acknowledge the truth and be converted to the true faith? In answer to this question I can say that with God's help very much is being done. Old priests are able to tell us that during the years of their ministry all that charity enjoined and all that holy zeal could prompt has been tried in these countries. Prayers offered up by priests and people and religious communities; sermons, controversies, lectures, conferences have been given on their behalf. In literature we can look back for some years on the work of the Catholic Truth Societies and to other numerous publications from the penny Catechism to larger books of instructions and to more advanced books which meet the requirements of the scientific world, in regard to Catholic faith and doctrine. Our churches are plentiful and access to them easy; we live before the world; our doctrine is openly preached; priests are zealous; our people taken as a whole are exemplary in the observance of the laws and discipline of the Church, and when we ask ourselves what more can be done I often think that it is difficult to say. I have, however, a very strong feeling, and, I think, a just one, that it is time non-Catholics did a little more for themselves. Grace in abundance is offered to them; the truth is manifested to them in every available form. They can find a Catholic church and a Catholic priest within easy distance of them; everything is made as easy as possible for them.

Now I may ask what more can they want? I know we have to continue to pray, to preach, and to work for their salvation; that we have not to relax our efforts, but rather to increase them in every possible manner and in the spirit of our Divine Master. We must not be disheartened, for where we fail others may succeed after us; if we do our duty better fewer will escape. There are moments of grace for every sinner; one prize is an abundant reward; to save one soul is worth the labor and the watchfulness of a lifetime.

But in the case of those who refuse the means of conversion and turn a deaf ear to all the divine inspirations, I would remind them of the words of the Apocalypse (iii. 20): "Behold I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." It is the King of glory who stands patiently at the door of the sinner or the unbeliever. In order to show the entire freedom which He leaves them He says in express terms: "If any man shall hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him." It is not enough to hear. The door must be opened. The man who wishes to be con-

verted has to put himself to inconvenience, to rouse himself, to make haste to shake off that slowness in well-doing which is natural to him. "The greatest difficulty is at the door which closes the entrance. What is this door? It is sin (or wilful infidelity). This is the barrier which has so long prevented God from entering the heart, and which is removed by a firm resolution of change of life; when this is made, the door is opened. There are some, indeed, who not only keep this door locked, but guarded by bars, bolts, and chains. Such persons have to go through hard work. . . . St. Augustine at one time desired to open the door; he struggled, toiled and labored without success. He answered God in his heart that he would open to Him, but not just yet. *Sed non modo*. O fatal power of habit! . . . If thou hast still difficulty in opening, pray to God to help thee to do so; for although it is true that He so respects thy free-will that He would have thee consent to open the door with thy own hand, yet no sooner dost thou make what effort thou canst on thy side, than He will bring so strong a pressure to bear on the door from without that thy opening and His entering will be simultaneous. 'If any man will open to me the door, I will come in to him.' See how great is thy Lord's desire to enter! He will not allow so much as a second to intervene between the opening and His entrance." *

This, dear brethren, is what we have to bear in mind always, the correspondence necessary on the part of the people to the teaching and guidance of the Good Shepherd, and to the labors and prayers of His servants. St. Paul teaches this doctrine when he says: "I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore neither he that planteth is anything nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." † For obtaining that increase, however, God requires consent and correspondence on the part of men, and it is always their own fault if they depart from the way of salvation. Christ tells us to seek and we shall find; and He also has said: "I am the door. By me if any man enter in he shall be saved: and he shall go in and go out, and shall find pastures." ‡

* Segneri, "The Manna of the Soul," vol. ii., p. 23.

† I. Cor. iii. 6.

‡ St. John, x. 9.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

(FIRST SUNDAY IN MAY.)

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

BY THE RIGHT REV. MGR. JOHN S. VAUGHAN.

"Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?"—Cant. vi. 9.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Our Lady's month. Reverence for saints. World honors national heroes. The saints our heroes. Honor due the Blessed Virgin. 1. Because Christ, our example, loved and honored her. Answer to an objection from His way of addressing her. 2. Because she is the Mother of the Word Incarnate. 3. Because she is the highest and purest of creatures. God chose her from all possible creatures. He made her perfect. Higher than the angels. 4. Because of her relation to ourselves. Our fellow creature. Our mother in the spiritual order. Analogy between her motherhood and that of earthly mothers. Both instruments of the power of God. Chosen as our mother on Calvary.

On this, the first Sunday of May, our thoughts are naturally drawn toward the ever glorious and immaculate Virgin Mother of God. In every land and in every clime this month is known to Catholics as "The Month of Mary," or "Our Lady's Month." Her sweet name is uttered by thousands of preachers; her praises are sung by millions of her loving children, and her memory this day stirs the hearts of every member of the Church throughout the world.

And is it not right and just, dear brethren, that we should thus publicly proclaim our esteem and reverence for one, at once so truly great and glorious in herself, and yet so intimately related to each and every one of us? The world is wont to honor its heroes of a day, to commemorate their achievements, and to keep their memory fresh and green. It raises costly monuments to their honor, places their images in conspicuous positions, and glories in their well-earned fame. And we, dear brethren, who are, as St. Paul reminds us, "fellow citizens with the saints" (Eph. ii. 19), ought surely to be ready to do as much, and, indeed, immeasurably more for the heroes and the great ones of the Church—for those whom the Church has declared "blessed" and whom she has raised upon her very altars for our veneration. Their glory shall never,

never fade. Time can not tarnish it. Calumny can not reach it. It is as enduring as God himself, for it is not dependent upon the fickle and often false judgment of men. Now among these, but immeasurably the greatest and the highest and the saintliest, is the incomparable queen of the heavenly host, "Mary Most Holy."

Why, it may be asked, do we honor her? What forms the basis and foundation of our profound esteem? Our esteem rests upon no mere fancy, but springs up from the very heart of the Christian faith.

We love Mary, yes, more than words can say, and honor her and revere her, because we are the followers of Christ, our divine Master. We have learned this lesson from no other than from Him, whose every wish, to us, is law. He is our Example, our Model, our Teacher. "Learn of me." "I am the way."

What was Christ's attitude toward her? It was an attitude of the most unheard of and the most marvelous tenderness, respect, and love, such indeed as could be rendered only by the most perfect of sons to the most admirable of mothers. Nay, more; He showed her not love only, but even submission and obedience. "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them" (Luke ii. 51), i. e., to Mary and Joseph. Who shall ever realize all the honor that is involved in the fact that for thirty years, out of a brief thirty-three, Jesus lived with Mary, conversed with her, honored her, and abided by her ruling?

Even during His public life, His relations with her were ever marked by the most generous and tender love. At the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, when the wine ran short, our blessed Lady did but represent how things stood, and our Lord at once acted upon her mere suggestion. And did so (a) without any pressing or insistence, and (b) even though "his hour had not yet come," and (c) notwithstanding that a great miracle was needed to enable Him to grant her prayer.

Some recall the expression employed by our Saviour: "Woman, what is it to me and to thee?" as a proof that Christ—forgive me even for repeating such an idea—was rude to her, or vexed, or at all events that He wished to signalize that He was little affected by her petition. Such a conclusion is wholly false. It has no warrant in Scripture, and arises from pure ignorance urged on by malice. Suffer me to explain. Jesus Christ employed not the English tongue, which then had no existence. He did not speak even Greek,

but expressed Himself in Aramaic. However, St. John, who records the event, inspired by the Holy Ghost, translates our Lord's words into Greek, in which form they have come down to us. So our nearest approach to the actual expression as it issued from our Lord's lips must be found in that language. Now the Greek word *γῑναι* which has been rendered "woman," carries with it nothing of the slur or the reproach which is connected with its English equivalent. In such a connection it is not necessary to summon Catholic witnesses, who may be thought biased. Any learned man, if he be but fair-minded, will testify to the fact. Let me then quote such an unimpeachable authority as that of the Protestant Richard Whately, Anglican Archbishop of Dublin. Referring to the marriage feast he observes: The Blessed Virgin "applied to Christ when the wine was deficient. His answer has not that roughness indeed which our English translation gives it, from the use of the term 'woman.' The word in the original is one which denotes no disrespect, being found in the classical Greek writers applied even to a queen" (Sermons on Various Subjects. Sermon ix., p. 226).

Thus it is clearly seen that the argument which our adversaries have founded upon that classical passage falls to the ground. Though we should rightly think an American or an English son guilty of gross rudeness and impropriety were he to address his mother in such words, we have no grounds whatever for passing a similar judgment upon a Hebrew or a Greek. The idioms and character of their languages differ so entirely from our own, that the words employed by us to suggest dishonor and disrespect are employed by them without the least suspicion of either. The word *γῑναι* applied by Christ to the Queen of heaven, is employed by classical Greek writers when addressing earthly queens, so that let us, once and for all, crush out this foolish and groundless objection urged by ignorant Protestants against the practice of honoring the Blessed Virgin, founded upon a mistaken estimate of the value of that word.

Since Christ is our Model, it is our bounden duty to try and imitate Him in all things, and if in all things, then most certainly in the love and consideration and filial obedience He invariably showed His immaculate mother.

A second motive for loving her is precisely on account of the relationship in which she stands to Him. He is indeed God, Creator, Father, Redeemer, and Benefactor. We owe Him every homage

and the worship and adoration of our whole hearts. No fibre of our being but should reverberate with love of Him, no faculty or power of our soul but should utter His praises and extol and acknowledge His divine nature and perfections. But how can we so love Him, and yet not love her? How can we burn at the utterance of His name, and yet remain cold and unmoved when we pronounce hers? Can we ever separate in thought Jesus from Mary? Dare we sever those whom God has so closely welded? Can we ever allow ourselves to forget, that if He is Son, she is mother; if He is Child, she is parent; if He is the greatest of all beings, she is the greatest of all creatures: "Blessed among women," and the chosen sanctuary of the uncreated and the eternal? Who was ever so closely related to the Infinite? Which of the angels or of the arch-angels can exclaim as she can: "Thou art my beloved son, this day—i. e., in the day of time—have I begotten thee, according to thy human nature, as the Father has begotten thee throughout eternity according to thy divine nature"?

Oh! Is it a small thing to give birth to the Son of God, that Protestants should make so little of it? Is it a matter of little consequence that God should have selected her from among all mankind to bear Him in the womb, to suckle Him at the breasts, and to press Him lovingly to the bosom, and to watch with unremitting care over his infant form? Shall we not rather ask: Who shall measure her dignity, or calculate the heights of her honor, or sound the depths of her privilege? What is the honor that we can show her as compared with this? Protestants wonder at our treating Mary as we do; they deem our reverence excessive, exaggerated, and altogether too unrestrained. But what is the honor and praise that man can show her compared with the honors and distinctions and exalted prerogatives heaped upon her by God? Just nothing at all!

O sweetest Mother! O Virgin undefiled! We poor sinners can never love thee in the measure in which He loved thee who deigned to be thy Son. Our fear, our anxiety, is not lest we should love thee too much, but lest we should not love thee half enough.

Love her, my brethren. Love her, first, because Christ our Example loved her. Love her, secondly, because of who she is; i. e., the mother of the Incarnate; and love her, thirdly, because of what she is; viz., the fairest and purest of creatures, and "our tainted nature's solitary boast," as the poet sings. Yes. The third motive

we have for honoring Mary is that she is the most exalted of our race and represents the very summit and high-water mark of created excellence and perfection.

This statement expresses the constant teaching of the Infallible Church, with which the Spirit of Truth remains forever. Fathers, and theologians, popes and doctors, have not merely accepted this dogma with every expression of joy and approval, but have vied with one another in their efforts to show that such was due to her and most fitting in view of the position which she was destined from all eternity to occupy as the mother of the Word made flesh.

Jesus Christ was not as other sons, who are incapable of selecting their own mothers. The ordinary child, about to be born, has no voice in the matter. But Christ was God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. It rested with Him, therefore, and wholly and solely with Him, to choose among all women the most worthy and the most fitting for the purpose. His choice lay among all the members of the human race, future as well as present, and merely possible as well as actual. The honor he was about to confer was unique, unparalleled, sublime, and in a sense, infinite. On whom would he confer it? Would He choose for his mother a sinner, when He might as easily have a saint? Would He choose a slave, when He might have a queen? Would He choose one stained and tarnished when He might have one pure and immaculate? Impossible! Christ, who has solemnly commanded us to honor our parents, would assuredly have shown us the example. Yea; He would surpass all earthly sons in the fulfilling of this commandment—as in the fulfilling of the rest. Yet even amongst ourselves what affection and honor we love to show to the parent who gives us birth! How we cherish the mother who has watched over us in our years of helplessness, who has suffered for us, and who has thought of us more than she has thought of herself. Is there anything that a dutiful son would not do for his mother? Is there any grace or favor, any gift of body or of spirit, that he would not confer on her, were he able? Is there any honor he would think excessive, could he bestow it by a word, or by a mere act of the will? Emphatically not. Then are we to believe that Jesus Christ, the model Son, would feel less lovingly toward His own mother? Perish the thought! His love was commensurate with His power, and in the exercise of both, He clothed her with a spiritual grace and beauty and splendor and perfection which outrivals that of the

highest of the angels. However stupendous and superbly magnificent may be the blessed spirits that stand before the throne of the Majesty of heaven, it would be clearly incongruous and unseemly that the mother of their King should in any sense be inferior to the ordinary courtiers of the supernal palace. To be only their equal would be too low, considering her relationship to Him. She, as the "God-bearer," is entitled to a preeminence and an exaltation as unique and as unapproachable as is the office she fills.

Justly then do we honor her, not only (1) because we must emulate the example of Jesus Christ; not only (2) because of her relationship to God; but (3) also by reason of her exalted virtue and incomparable perfection, which render her deserving of honor for her own sake.

To these reasons we must add yet another, and that is her relation to ourselves. Not only is she a member of our own family, and like us, a child of Adam, and the most beautiful and favored of all our race, but she is our mother—as truly our mother in the spiritual order as our earthly mother is in the natural order. This is no poetic dream, but a stern fact, as true as it is consoling. For what constitutes "the mother" in the natural order? It is the giving of natural life and existence; not, indeed, as the absolute giver, since God alone is the absolute author even of our natural being, but the instrumental giver. So is it in the spiritual order. Our life is Jesus Christ. Our supernatural life, and the absolute source of all our grace and spiritual being is God-made-man. And it is through Mary and by Mary that the God-made-man has chosen to come to us and to give us Himself. You may say, but Mary is but the instrument, God is the real giver. Quite true; but precisely the same may be said in the natural order regarding our earthly mother; yet that in no way affects the genuineness of her maternity. Do we think that no honor is due to our earthly mother because she is merely the instrumental cause of our life? Do you refuse to offer any gratitude and affection to her because, forsooth, not she, but God, and He alone, is the supreme and absolute Author of your being? Do you taunt her with the fact that of herself she could never, by any possibility, have given you birth at all? That but for God's cooperation and watchful care and providence and creative power and established biological laws, human generation would be an impossibility. No; though you fully recognize God as your only Creator, yet you turn with loving eyes

and hearts all overflowing with gratitude to her by whom and through whom God has conferred upon you life and motion and human sensibility.

Similarly, we know and confess that in the spiritual order likewise God is alone the supreme Author of our spiritual life, and that no grace exists that can not be traced ultimately to Him. Yet, since He confers these spiritual favors through Mary, we must turn to her also, and thank and praise her as the instrument that God has selected and as the channel of our spiritual life. She is our mother, in the fullest sense of the word, and as though to accentuate and emphasize the fact yet more strongly, and to burn it deep and ineffaceably in our hearts for all time, He deigned not merely to declare it, but to choose the most solemn and sublime moment in which to do so. From the cross, as he lay in agony, and shedding the last drop of his sacred blood for us poor, unworthy sinners, he spoke of her to St. John, and in the person of St. John to all of us, and said, "Behold thy mother."

These words are pregnant with meaning. They are the words of God, and like all God's words they have their intended effect. Mary then is our mother. God wished it to be so. All thanks be to Him for this precious gift, the gift of a mother and a mother's love. Yes, great should be our gratitude for the love which prompted so rich and so generous a gift. Honor then all your life, and especially during this month, Mary the Queen of Heaven. Honor her with all the loyal, pure, tender affection of a child's heart—it is her due and Christ expects this from you. Remember that in honoring her you are paying court to the most powerful advocate that a sinful client can have to plead his cause before the tribunal of the all searching and all just Judge. Remember that in honoring her you are but honoring all motherhood, and in particular your own mother, who bore you at the foot of the cross, and the mother of your Saviour who died for you on that cross. You are but honoring her who is your life, your sweetness, and your hope; whose mother eyes will watch you as you wander along the paths of life; whose mother heart will rejoice with you in happiness and sorrow with you in your sadness; whose mother hand will ever lead you away from the precipice of sin and ruin, and who will ever be anxious and concerned about you till the dawn of that never-ending day upon which she is to present you, her client, her child, to her divine Son for judgment, and to receive you back crowned with the crown

of salvation and destined tenderly to breathe forth the praises of Christ and His mother for ever and ever.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE VALUE OF FAITH.

BY THE RIGHT REV. RAPHAEL MOSS, O.P.

“And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believed not in me.”—Gospel.

SYNOPSIS.—*Christ's judgment concerning the world—that it is in sin through lack of faith.*

I. Differences between those who have faith and those who have it not: (a) In their views of spiritual things (b) at the time of death.

II. Faith a free gift, but may be lost by our own fault. Causes of loss of faith: (a) Hardened and burnt up by the heat of pride; (b) Sunk in the filth of sin. Example—The apostasy of England in the sixteenth century.

III. Sacrifices which faith requires of us. (a) No longer the sacrifice of life by martyrdom; but of: 1. Our understanding—God demands our belief; 2. Of our hearts—He wishes our love and confidence even when He seems harsh with us. This hard to do when things go wrong.

Exhortation.—*To preserve the faith which we possess.*

These words were spoken by our blessed Lord on the evening of the last day of His mortal life. They were spoken at a time when, humanly speaking, His work seemed to be on the point of failing utterly. For three years He had gone about preaching His Gospel and working the most wonderful miracles, and the result of His toil, and the fruit of His labors might be said to be gathered together in that upper room in the hearts of twelve poor, ignorant men, whose faith and loyalty were ready to fail at the first trial. Outside lay the mighty world of heathen darkness, so far untouched by the light of His teaching, and the restless, doubting world of God's chosen people, in which He had lived, was at that very moment plotting to take away His life. Yet it was at that moment that He spoke these words of confidence and power. “When the Spirit, whom I will send, is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me.” This very fact of His rejection by those to whom He had spoken, their refusal to see in Him their

Messias, this was the one thing to which He pointed as the cause of their ruin and rejection. "He will convince the world of sin because they believed not in me." At that dark moment, therefore, when the triumph of His foes seemed most assured, and the failure of His mission most apparent, He judged them in advance, and pointed out as the root and cause of all their sins and consequent punishments the sin of unbelief. And indeed this sin of unbelief, this want of faith, is really the explanation of every other sin that separates us from God. And on the contrary, the virtue of faith is the source of every virtue that unites us to God and makes the soul beautiful in His sight. And because the actual possession of the gift of faith by no means assures us of its continuance we can not do better than consider the nature and the various causes which may lead to the loss of this precious gift, and perhaps also explain its absence in many of those who have it not. And first of all that it is a real gift and not an acquired power of the soul or mind of man seems so evident as hardly to require proof. Faith is to the soul what sight is to the body, and as reasonably might you expect a man born blind to convince himself by study of the existence of light and the many beauties of the face of nature, as that the poor, weak, limited understanding of man should, by its own effort, penetrate to the hidden glories of Him who dwelleth in light unapproachable. And the state of that poor blind man is not further removed from the state of one who rejoices in the power of sight than is the state of one who believes not, distinct from that of one who is blessed with the gift of faith. The one gropes along the pathway of life, trying to content himself with what he has, and wondering at, or perhaps even ridiculing, the pretensions of those who claim to possess what he can not even understand. And believers on the other hand not unfrequently experience a feeling of astonishment that blindness should be so unreasonable and incurable. The man who believes not, comes into the Catholic church and sees the strange ceremonial, the vestments and light and incense, and puts it all down as a meaningless show; over and over again God's truths are put before him and his mind is led to the very brink of conclusions, which he does not even seem to notice, whilst on the other hand the Catholic crosses the threshold of that door to feel himself in his father's house, and without any shadow of effort or constraint to receive into his heart truths that beget a peace worlds can not give. And when death comes to the one it comes as a dark and

horrible mystery, freezing up the failing fountains of his soul, and plunging him into deeper and yet more hopeless, helpless darkness; or perhaps it comes to him as to the brute beast, striking a poor, weak, suffering body in which the soul seems already dead, but to the Catholic, strong in his faith, it comes as a dear friend, tearing away the veils that have so often tried him and well-nigh allowing him to see with his own eyes and hear with his own ears the glories that eye has never seen nor ear heard, and whispering to him of toil and labor over, and rest and comfort close at hand.

Manifestly then this virtue of faith, this power of belief, is a gift of God—but from this we must not argue that therefore it is beyond our feeble reach, and that we are not to blame if it be not ours, or if it once was ours and now is so no longer. It is a gift, most certainly, a glorious gift, gratuitous, utterly undeserved, sent down to us by the Father of Lights, but we can obtain it by prayer and humble supplication, and once bestowed it is never withdrawn, save in punishment of grievous sin. It is a gift, and so is the power of sight, which enables us to drink in the beauty and loveliness of God's visible creation, and the sorrow and anguish and anxiety with which we should seek the power of sight had we been born in blindness is but a faint shadow of the supernatural care with which we should cherish the gift of faith.

But what is the reality? How many there are who have not the faintest idea of the wonderful faith of God in the soul! How many Catholics are there in this parish who have received this most precious gift at the font of baptism, and then have thrown it away as a vile and worthless thing in the days of their proud and self-reliant manhood. And why is this the case? Why are there so many blind souls who have never known the beautiful light of faith, or having known it have closed their eyes and wilfully chosen a desolating blindness. Is it their fault or is it God's? Must we blame them or their Maker? Is it their foolishness or God's cruelty?

Dearest brethren, when the winter is over and gone, and the tiny plant pushes its delicate leaves above the ground and slowly thrives and flourishes until the flower and fruit seem close at hand—it may perish even then from one of two causes. Perhaps day after day the hot sun beats down upon it, until the earth around it is parched and broken, and all the moisture on which it lives is dried up, and then one by one the green leaves droop and fade and the stalk bends lower and lower and lower, until at last the plant is withered and

dead! Or on the other hand, the sun may never shine at all, but throughout the long weeks the sun may hide his brightness, and the sweeping rain may fall incessantly, until the rich earth becomes mud, and the roots rot away in the water. Now the soul of man is such a plant in the garden of God's creation, and faith is the beautiful flower which crowns it and slowly ripens into the fruit of good works. But this faith implies lowliness of mind, the submission of our reason to its Maker, the laying at His feet in tribute the brightest jewels of our crown, and all this is hard to flesh and blood, for there is ever whispering in the fallen heart of man the secret voice of self-love and of self-worship, urging him to raise his head against his Maker, prompting him to tell Him to His face, "I will not serve." And woe to the soul that listens to the whisperings of that voice. The soft-falling rain of grace will cease, the heavens above will become as brass, and the earth as of iron, and the heart will become as hard as a rock, as the life of the soul fades away. Moses spoke to the King of Egypt and wrought mighty wonders in his presence, but the King hardened his heart and they were all in vain. Jesus Christ Himself preached to the Scribes and Pharisees and wrought amongst them works, the like of which no man had done, and yet they were not touched or convinced. They were the wise and prudent of this world from whom the things of God were hidden, to be revealed only to little ones, whose hearts were softened and obedient, whereas the hearts of those blind leaders were hardened and burnt up with deadly pride. And it is just the pride of heart and of mind that God will destroy at any cost. It is odious in His sight. He demands of us the avowal of our own littleness, the humble confession of our inability to look on Him face to face. And it is only when the soul has done this, it is only when she has fallen with her face in the dust, and declared her readiness to accept what she can not see or understand, it is only then that God stoops down to her lowliness and pours upon her and around her the glorious light of faith.

If then there are so many souls still lost in the exterior darkness of unbelief, we can put it down in the case of many among them to this secret pride of mind and heart. They see the evidence of God's work, they hear the announcement of His truths, and having eyes they see not and having ears they hear not, and their foolish heart is hardened. They will not stoop to listen; they will not submit to be taught; they will not acknowledge that they can pos-

sibly have been in the wrong. And this same foolish pride explains the falls of so many foolish Catholics who banish from their minds the light they had received, the light that hath given joy to their youth, in order to win the applause of others more foolish than themselves, and to hear themselves praised as strong-minded and independent.

But there is another cause of unbelief to which we have alluded, one which is in many ways more evident and easy to discover, because visible to all the world; but this cause our blessed Lord himself pointed out, when He declared that although He himself, the Light of God, had come into the world to give light, yet men fled from Him and loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. "For," He said, "every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reprov'd" (John iii. 20). In other words, there are some hearts so corrupted, so buried in sin that they positively shun the light of faith, and dread its brightness because it shows them their sins and iniquities in their true and terrible colors. In souls such as these there is not even the wish to believe, and this readiness to accept the teaching of God is surely the first condition of all faith. Such souls may hear the sound of those wonderful words spoken on the green hillside of Galilee, "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8)—but there is no answering echo in their hearts. They have no wish to see God simply because their hearts are so unclean and polluted with the love of all that is low and degrading. How can the flower of faith flourish in such a muddy soil? Slowly, but most surely, it must wither away and die, and leave the unhappy uncrowned soul to be cut down and cast into the fire in punishment of a lot to which it has actually become indifferent. For it is of such souls that St. Peter speaks so indignantly, comparing them to the irrational beasts, fountains without water, clouds tossed by whirlwinds, and assuring us that for them is reserved an eternal mist of darkness. The darkness of wilful ignorance and unbelief in this world, and in the next, the darkness of the hopeless loss of God.

Now open for a moment the pages of history and see for yourselves how truly all this is borne out by facts. Pass over the earlier ages of the Church and the many proud rebels who made shipwreck of their faith rather than obey the voice of the Church. Look at the desolate picture of the sixteenth century. When it

first opened on the world, it found a united Christendom, bound together by the one faith of one baptism in obedience to one Lord—its closing years looked upon a sight that might even have made the bright angels of peace weep tears bitterly. Whole nations were in arms against their mother, the Church of Christ, and millions of souls were bound together with the chains of heresy and schism—a terrible harvest for the flames of hell. But what was the cause of it all? Simply pride and corruption of heart! We need not look farther than our own country and our own race, for, alas! that it should be so, we are of all others a divided people; our old national feasts are forgotten save for a mere handful of believers; the consecrated altars of God are in the hands of robbers and strangers, and “the ways of Sion mourn, for there are few that come to her solemnities” (Lamentations i. 4). And whatever lying teachers may say to the contrary to justify centuries of sacrilegious theft and of unrelenting persecution, the terrible truth is written in letters of blood across the pages of history. England once was a Catholic nation and is so no longer, because of the pride and wickedness of her king and people. The king looked with impure eyes upon a woman, and that he might satisfy his lust, he cast off the wife to whom he had been bound for eighteen years—he denied his faith and ruthlessly murdered all who were too pure or too noble to uphold him in his wickedness. And whilst some, happy and blessed above all words, thus died for the faith of England, others revelled in the license which the destruction of their faith had brought them, and others again forgot a faith which was no longer constantly before them and which was now to be purchased at such a heavy price of danger and suffering. And so at last it came to pass that the whole nation cast away and blasphemed the faith that had been so dear to their fathers, and learned to hate what they had loved, and to love what they had hated.

We live in happier days. This same faith of our fathers “is living still in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword,” it is living still in our hearts, and from our hearts as from a bright shining lamp, its radiance must fall on those who still sit in darkness. Yet we must not deceive ourselves! We must remember that it is a gift, and such a precious gift, that God will only give it to those who are willing to make some sacrifice in return to show their appreciation. And what is the sacrifice? In our times, at least, He does not ask the sacrifice of our bodies—the pouring out our blood in the cruel

agonies of death. Such a glorious death is not for cowards and sinners such as we, but He does ask for and insist upon the sacrifice of our souls, and the sacrifice of its powers, the sacrifice of the understanding and the sacrifice of the will, the whole-burnt offering of the mind and heart.

There is first of all, the sacrifice of the understanding. God is our Creator—we are His creatures; God is infinite—we are finite. It follows, therefore, necessarily, and by a strict logical consequence, that we can not comprehend God. It follows that in Him there must be wondrous depths which we can never fathom, heights to which it is impossible that we should ever ascend, otherwise we should be equal to Him. True, He might have brought us to the brink and strengthened us to gaze upon them and see that they were there. He might have forced our reason to ascend to them, by light, which it could not withstand—but He has not so willed it. He would have us believe. Some day He will draw aside the veil that hides His glorious beauty, and let us gaze thereon, if during this life we are content to hear His voice and to believe that He is there, our loving Father—our watchful Friend—our eternal God. And not only must we listen to His voice and obey, but in spite of the darkness we must trust ourselves to His guidance, we must give Him the sacrifice of the heart. He tells us that it is He who made and who rules us unceasingly and with such a watchful eye that not one hair of our head can fall to the ground without His knowledge. He tells us that He is infinite wisdom and that all His acts are guided by reasons infinitely wise and just and beautiful. He tells us that He is good, goodness itself, and that He loves every one of us with an exceeding love—with a love to which the love of a mother for her only child is but the faintest shadow. He tells us all this and then He strikes us, until at times it seems as though our hearts would break with the cruel anguish, and all the while He would have us bow down and kiss the hand from which the blow has come, and then go on bravely in the darkness, with joyful heart and bright, smiling face, ever repeating, “As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done, blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job i. 21).

The sacrifice of the body is painful, if you will, but the sacrifice of the heart is worse, and only the heart knoweth its exceeding bitterness—but blessed be God’s holy name. He has His martyrs here in all ages, though the world may know them not and no eye save His see and count the tears of blood that fall from them in

their hour of conflict. Ah! it is easy enough to talk of faith, but to live by faith is to be a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men! It is easy enough to talk about our Father, who is in heaven, when all is smiling on us and our hearts are light and joyous; it is easy enough to say "Give us this day our daily bread" when our means are abundant and want is a stranger to our doors. But when the little ones ask for bread and there is none to give them, when the arm that toiled for us is lying helpless on a bed of sickness, or when work is scarce and starvation stares us in the face—then it is that faith alone can speak to us of a Father in heaven, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field. We can talk glibly and thoughtlessly about the will of God when all falls out as we desire, but when all our dearest hopes lie shattered and all our brightest dreams have faded, and the strongest ties of love and friendship have been ruthlessly broken, then it is that we must walk by faith and not by sight, and bid our aching hearts still sing on bravely, "Thy will, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We may not even see the reasons why we have been so sorely stricken, we can but suffer in the darkness and lean on faith alone, but it is at this moment above all others that God is knocking at the door of our souls, and if we will but open to Him, He will enter and will give us an ample compensation for every separate pang in the abundance of that peace which surpasseth all understanding.

This beautiful gift then of faith is ours. It was given to us at our baptism, placing us at the entrance of that narrow way that leadeth to the eternal home where we shall see our Saviour face to face. It is, therefore, our simple duty to treasure up this gift with loving, zealous care. It is a gift of grace and grace must guard it, and grace is given, as you know, in answer to prayer, and above all in the sacraments. To neglect prayer, to neglect the sacraments, to be careless about our religion, is a sure and, I might almost say, a necessary way of losing our faith. Stir up then once more the grace that is in you, renew your fervent resolutions, and let us show the world that our faith, our glorious Catholic faith is the moving principle of our lives, the gracious and beautiful flower of our souls, blossoming forth into the fruit of good works which win the hearts of all around us and lead them to glorify our Father, who is in heaven.

But if in our case that flower seems to have been withered in the bloom, or if, perhaps, it has never even put forth its tiny buds—if

we are trying to go through life with faith in no one but ourselves, ah! then we are walking in a mist of darkness which will last forever. Yet it is never too late to save ourselves; we have but to look round on the world in which we live and it will tell us of its Maker; we have but to raise our eyes to the heavens and they will show forth His glory, and thus little by little we shall be led on by the hand like children, until faith dawns on the soul and brings us swiftly to His feet. And then and not till then shall we find rest. For although sorrow and suffering and trouble may and will seek us even there, yet will the voice of faith be ever sounding in our hearts, telling us at whose feet we are kneeling and helping us to cry out bravely when all seems darkest, "Lord! Lord! I believe. Help Thou my unbelief" (Mark ix. 23).

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THE PATRONAGE OF ST. JOSEPH.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR DEVINE, PASSIONIST.

"Who thinkest thou, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath appointed over his family, to give them meat in season?"—Matt. xxiv. 45.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—*The position of St. Joseph as Patron of the Church of God, and his relation thereby to the faithful children of God. Our devotion to him should be renewed on the occasion of this Feast.*

1. By reason of the will of God. 2. By reason of the will of the Church.

I. Point. St. Joseph considered as the special patron of every Christian family. 1. The home at Nazareth the pattern of a true Christian home. 2. The character and qualities of St. Joseph as the head of the family learned from the Gospel history of the mysteries of our Lord's infancy and childhood. 3. His life was made up of joys and sorrows. 4. Such is the life of every man, especially every father of a family—How these are to take a lesson from the example of St. Joseph, and how the family should be considered on earth and in heaven.

II. Point. St. Joseph considered as the special patron of labor and of laborers. 1. He was himself an artisan or laborer. 2. He would not be an extremist in the claims of labor. 3. According to Christian principles he would be the right kind of leader. He himself was a just man. He would teach the true doctrine of Christ as affecting both rich and poor, employers and employed.

Conclusion.—*An exhortation to all to imitate the example of the great saint, to trust in his intercession, and to deserve his protection, that he may assist them during life, and above all obtain for them the grace of happy death.*

These words of our Saviour by which He instructed His disciples

concerning the faithful stewards of God are applied by the Church to the holy Patriarch St. Joseph, and with good reason. He was elected by God Himself to be the husband of the Immaculate Mother of Jesus, to be foster-father of Christ, and to be the head and guardian of the Holy Family.

We have been reminded of this position of St. Joseph by the Feast of his Patronage which was celebrated this week. By that position of St. Joseph and his relation to Jesus and Mary, we are reminded also of the position which St. Joseph occupies in the church of God, and of his relation to the faithful children of God. It is, therefore, becoming that each year on the recurrence of this feast we should renew our devotion to him, and this means the praise and invocation of his name, the imitation of his virtues, and the cultivation and propagation of his spirit in our midst. Special devotion to St. Joseph is clearly in accordance with the will of God, for we can scarcely separate his name from the names of Jesus and Mary. It is a devotion most pleasing to Jesus and Mary, because it honors him whom they so much honor and love; and it is due to the saint himself by reason of his great excellence and the perfection of his virtues. The mind of the Church with regard to this devotion is made known to us in many ways, but especially by the fact that she has instituted two feast days in his honor, one on the 19th of March to commemorate his holy life and its reward afterward in heaven; another to commemorate his patronage, and to impress upon the minds of the faithful the importance of this prerogative. Pope Pius IX., by a decree *urbis et orbis* of the 8th of December, 1870, proclaimed St. Joseph Patron of the whole Christian family, that is the Catholic Church. He is the faithful and wise servant whom the Lord hath appointed over his family, and his patronage designates his protecting power over all the children of the Church. Aptly, therefore, do we apply to him those words spoken of another Joseph, who as leader and prince in Egypt was a type or figure of St. Joseph: "Ite ad Joseph"—"Go to Joseph," and those of the Psalmist: "He made him master of his house and ruler of all his possession" (Ps. civ. 21).

The protecting influence of St. Joseph on behalf of his clients is beautifully represented to us by the words of St. Teresa in the history of her life. "It seems to me," she says, "that to other saints our Lord has given power to succor us in only one kind of necessity, but this glorious saint, I know by my own experience,

assists us in all kinds of necessities; hence our Lord, it appears, wishes us to understand that as He was obedient to him on earth (for he was called His father; and being as it were His tutor, he could command Him), so now in heaven He grants him whatever he asks. This truth many others also have experienced, who have recommended themselves to him by my desire: many are now devoted to him, and I myself have fresh experience of his power" (Her Life, ch. vi.).

With this view of his general patronage before our minds let us come to particulars, and in particular I wish to bring St. Joseph before you in a twofold aspect.

1. As the patron of every Christian family.
2. As the patron of labor and of operatives or working people.

1. St. Joseph as the patron of every Christian family. As he was the head, the ruler, and provider of the family of Nazareth so he may be well regarded as the father and patron of every Christian family; for the home of Nazareth should be regarded as the pattern of every Christian home. St. Joseph at the time of his marriage to the Blessed Virgin, which, according to the common Catholic opinion, was celebrated before the time of the mystery of the Annunciation, was not a very old and feeble man as he is sometimes represented. He was a man of mature or middle age, full of prudence and virtue, and in every way a man able and fitted to support the holy family, and to be a worthy and proper guardian of Jesus and Mary for a term of nearly thirty years.

The character and excellent qualities of St. Joseph are made known to us in the Gospels through the mysteries of our Lord's infancy and childhood. His fear at the time of the incarnation and how that fear was removed is told us by St. Matthew. "Whereupon Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. i. 19, 20). We can picture to ourselves his joy at the birth of Christ when Mary "brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger" (Luke ii. 7). When the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke ii. 14).

When the shepherds of Bethlehem came, and as St. Luke tells us: "They found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger" (Luke ii. 16). And again, when the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, saying: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? . . . and entering into the house they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh" (Matt. ii. 2, 11). After these events we find St. Joseph again subjected to great fear and anxiety by the mysterious message of the angel of the Lord who again appeared in sleep to him, saying: "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him" (Matt. ii. 13). The vigilance, the obedience, and the loving care of St. Joseph are at once displayed, for, as St. Matthew tells us, he "arose, and took the child and his mother by night and retired into Egypt: and he was there until the death of Herod" (Matt. ii. 14, 15). After his return from Egypt he with Mary and the Child Jesus took up his abode at Nazareth, and the chief event of this period of the childhood of Jesus is that related by St. Luke concerning the loss of the Child Jesus and His being found in the Temple after three days. From this narrative we learn that the parents of Jesus went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch. That Joseph and Mary had sought the child sorrowing; and that after they found Him, "he went down with them, and came to Nazareth: and was subject to them" (Luke ii. 51). St. John Chrysostom, commenting on the life of St. Joseph during all these events, says: "Joseph is anxious on seeing the Virgin with child: an angel removes his anxiety and fear; he rejoices at the Child's birth, but a great fear succeeds; the furious King Herod seeks to destroy the Child and the whole city is in an uproar to take away His life. This is followed by another joy—the adoration of the Magi. A new sorrow then arises; he is ordered to fly into a far unknown country without help or acquaintance. Thus did one trial succeed another, one joy another, until his happy death."

His holy life was therefore made up of joy and sorrow, and we may well ask: Does not the life of every man and especially of every father of a family resemble in this respect the life of St. Joseph? made up of joys, of sorrows, and of cares. This world, they learn by experience, with all its joys and pleasures, is a world of suffering

and of wrong, and through these God works His ends in our souls. There is not a heart which has not had its share of grief, and that which has been shall be. We have, however, as true Christians, to turn to good account the evils of life and to meet them in a manly and Christian spirit, then though they come they will not grieve nor injure us; they will not prove a stumbling block in the way of our spiritual progress; nay, rather they will be a continual help and a blessing.

St. Joseph teaches us and will help us to do this. We have only to turn our thoughts in the midst of all the cares and trials of life to the holy family of Nazareth. The family is a very humble one, consisting of three persons, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. But it is so exalted before the eyes of God that nothing equal to it was ever found on earth, nor in heaven is there nothing more worthy, except the prototype, the Most Holy Trinity. Let us then, dear brethren, direct our thoughts to this great saint in his conclusion with the Holy Family, and consider that Holy Family on earth and in heaven, for every human family should be considered on earth and in heaven. This we should frequently do in order that the members of each family here may be equalled there—whether three, five, or ten members of a family here, that so it may be there—and that those who yet remain here may be one with the members of their family, who have departed out of this life and gone to heaven. To St. Joseph let us look for special help in this respect, and to his intercession let us direct our prayers, and he, as patron of the Christian family, will be ever faithful and true to his appointed office.

2. St. Joseph, the patron of labor, and of operatives or working people.

St. Joseph was not one of the wealthy men of his day. He earned his bread in the sweat of his brow. He was an artisan, a working-man, and our Lord was called the carpenter's son. It is for this reason that St. Joseph is to be regarded in a special manner as the patron of labor and of laborers. As a mechanic and workman he has left us in this respect an example worthy of study and of imitation. Would that all laborers and especially all workingmen could be brought to understand this, and to take St. Joseph as their model and their leader. He would prove a true and faithful leader, and his example if followed would go a long way toward settling the numerous difficulties of the labor question in our own day. We could not picture him, it is true, as an extremist in pushing his

claims, as an instigator of violence and of strife, or as a leader of the radical and unreasonable element amongst his fellow-workmen. Yet, I believe, that if workingmen as well as others could be induced to take St. Joseph as their leader and protector, he would lead them well and direct them well in all their temporal and spiritual affairs to happier and more Christian lives here, and to eternal peace and happiness hereafter.

The Scripture tells us he was a just man, and no other man had a better opportunity of knowing the true doctrine of Christ. We can, therefore, say that he had no sympathy with wealthy owners and employers who were unjust, inhuman, and fraudulent, and that he would be the first to protest against all unjust dealings did they exist in his day as they do now, and I can understand that his protest, whatever form it might take, would be more efficacious than some of the modern methods adopted for putting an end to such practices. He has greater power now in heaven than when on earth. His teaching now is that of his divine Son, and it is made known to the world through the Vicar of Christ on earth. It can not be better expressed than in the words of the late Sovereign Pontiff Leo XIII.: "First of all, there is no intermediary more powerful than religion (whereof the Church is the interpreter and guardian) in drawing the rich, and the poor bread-winners, together, by reminding each class of its duties to the other, and especially of the obligations of justice. Thus religion teaches the laboring man and the artisan to carry out honestly and fairly all equitable agreements freely entered into; never to injure the property, nor to outrage the person of an employer; never to resort to violence in defending their own cause, nor to engage in riot and disorder; and to have nothing to do with men of evil principles, who work upon the people with artful promises, and excite foolish hopes which usually end in useless regrets, followed by insolvency.

"Religion teaches the wealthy owner and the employer that their workpeople are not to be accounted their bondsmen; that in every man they must respect his dignity and worth as a man and as a Christian; that labor is not a thing to be ashamed of, if we lend ear to right reason and to Christian philosophy, but is an honorable calling enabling a man to sustain his life in a way upright and creditable; and that it is shameful and inhuman to treat men like chattels to make money by, and to look upon them merely as so much muscle or physical power. Again, therefore, the Church teaches that as

religion and things spiritual and mental are among the working-man's concerns, the employer is bound to see that the worker has time for his religious duties; that he be not exposed to corrupting influences and dangerous occasions; and that he be not led away to neglect his home and family, or to squander his earnings. Furthermore, the employer must never tax his workpeople beyond their strength, or employ them in work unsuited to their age and sex. His great and principal duty is to give every one a fair wage. . . . To defraud any one of wages that are his due is a crime which cries to the avenging anger of heaven: 'Behold, the hire of the laborers . . . which by fraud has been kept back by you, crieth, and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth' (James v. 4). Lastly, the rich must religiously refrain from cutting down the workmen's earnings, whether by force, by fraud, or by usurious dealing, and with all the greater reason, because the laboring man is, as a rule, weak and unprotected, and because his slender means should in proportion to their scantiness be accounted sacred. "Were these precepts carefully obeyed and followed out, would they not be sufficient of themselves to keep under all strife and all its causes?" (Encyclical Letter, May 15, 1891).

This then is what St. Joseph would most certainly teach his clients, and he would by his intercession with his divine Son obtain for men the necessary light and help to obey the precepts laid down, and to follow them if he were invoked properly, that is, with confidence, with piety and devotion. His patronage implies two things: namely, the imitation of the saint and his protecting influence. If we wish to benefit by the latter let us prove ourselves deserving of it by walking in his footsteps and by cultivating in our own souls the virtues which adorned his. Above all let us remember all that is involved in the phrase, Joseph was a just man. This means that he fulfilled faithfully his duties to God and man. We should never forget that God has His rights as well as man. We hear a great deal about men's rights and women's rights, too, in our public assemblies, and in our published claims, but we hear too little about God's rights and what is due to Him. Many are careful to give to man his due. They listen and must attend to his claims, but they neglect God and steal from Him and think very little of it. This may be shown from the neglect of religious duties, neglect of the divine public services in our churches, neglect of parents in regard to the religious education of their children. We do not like

to have people careless and indifferent to ourselves in matters that affect our pockets or our temporal affairs, then let us, as true Christians, always remember that our duty to God comes first, and after that our duty to our fellowmen. Let all, and especially workmen (I say "especially workmen" not to signify that they are more negligent than others, but because I refer them to St. Joseph as their special patron) keep the example of St. Joseph before us and reflect often on the manner in which he performed all his duties toward God; on his love for Jesus and Mary; on his care for the holy family, and if we imitate him in our duties, especially in our duties toward God during life, we may hope to obtain through his intercession the grace of a happy death. Death may be for us either the gate of hell, or the gate of purgatory, or the gate of heaven. He who died in the arms of Jesus and Mary and in union of love with them, is before all others the patron of a happy death, and may he obtain for each one of us the privilege to die like him in God's grace and in union of love with Jesus and Mary.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

PRUDENCE IN PRAYER.

"Be prudent, therefore, and watch in prayers."—I. Peter iv. 7.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *Let prudence direct you: 1. To pray always. 2. To pray especially during temptations. 3. To pray under trials. 4. To pray for direction.*

II. *Watch that your conduct is not inconsistent with your petitions: 1. Lest you act contrary to them. 2. Lest you waste the graces you receive. 3. Lest you condemn yourself.*

One, brethren, of the most important exercises in the life of a Christian, one which we should be continually exercising, is that of prayer. And we would naturally think that since this duty is so important, we would be most careful to become perfect in prayer, and would seldom need any exhortation regarding it. But, alas, it is not so, and it is a subject about which we can not hear too much. For some there are who neglect prayer almost entirely, and there are others who do pray even frequently, but in such a very imperfect and inconsistent manner, that their prayers are mere lip service rather than anything else. The exhortation, then, of St. Peter

is indeed needed, and the prudence and watchfulness of which he speaks call for our most serious consideration. The first will teach us when to pray; the second will point out special defects in our manner of praying.

I. 1. Prayer is the raising of our minds and hearts to God, to beg from Him the graces we need, to thank Him for His benefits to us, and to seek His help to avert evils. It may broadly be called a communing with, or a conversation with, God. It is divided into vocal and mental prayer. It is vocal when our lips recite a set form of words, as we do in the "Our Father," but it is mental when we pour forth our soul in fervent supplications for His help, for graces; our understanding reflecting upon His goodness and greatness, and our will making resolution to do what is most pleasing to Him. But one thing we must ever remember about prayer, namely, that when we do pray we are in His august presence, and we therefore must never for a moment forget this. Prayer is indeed an absolute necessity for the salvation of our souls. God in His wisdom has made certain conditions which we must comply with before we can enter heaven. Christ himself has told us, "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments" (Matt. xix. 17), yet this indeed is not always easy. It requires one continual struggle, one continual war. Christ has summed up the characteristics of the Christian's life in those wondrous words, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. xvi. 24). Yes; we have our cross to carry, our battles to fight. We have a body which hates pain and mortification, and its five senses are always craving for pleasures, with an impetuosity which we know but too well. We have the example of the world before us, a body of men and women, who deny themselves nothing their appetites demand, caring nothing that God forbids these things. Such people seem happy; they have ease, luxury, and often wealth, which our poor bodies cry out for. Their example, their seeming happiness, and their alluring words, are ever so many temptations to us to cast away our cross and follow them. Then comes the wily serpent, the devil, who is God's enemy, and who hates us because we are God's children. He has a keen, cunning intellect, the experience of centuries, and even great and holy men have been conquered by him. The world and the flesh are in league with him, and are continually striving to lead us into the most serious sins, and thus, if possible, cause our destruction and lead us on to eternal

perdition. Ah, think now what this warfare really is. We have to battle with three united enemies, each of which is greater and superior to our poor weak selves. There can be no question then as to who will be the victor. If a weak man can not resist one that is more powerful, how can we resist, not one, but three, most powerful enemies? We can not do so by our own strength; we must have the help, the assistance, the grace of God. What sap is to the tree, what sunshine is to the flower, what food is to the body, that grace is to the soul. But prayer is a means of obtaining God's grace, and as our enemies are ever at war with us, so must we pray always, pray incessantly for grace to resist them, for power to overcome their temptations. Well then does St. Paul say, "Pray without ceasing" (I. Thess. v. 17). And our Lord himself teaches that "we ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1).

2. But if earnest and fervent prayer is necessary at all times, still there are moments when we must pray even more fervently than at other times if that be possible, and these moments are the moments of temptation. The prudent general when at war with his enemies, if attacked by a more numerous and superior force to his own, hesitates not for an instant either to send for or fall back upon his reserves. He knows well that unless he does so the battle will be lost, and he will be conquered. What is temptation but an attempt made by our enemies to lead us into sin, to conquer us and make us prisoners and lead us in the end to perdition? We know well that we are very weak; we know that we have fallen before, and that unless we receive help we shall most surely be conquered again. Is not this then in itself a proof that we ought to pray for help, especially in the moment of temptation? The true soldier is ever on the alert preparing for the coming of the enemy, and he makes everything ready, and sees to all that can in any way strengthen his position; but when the enemy arrives and actually attacks him, then he puts forth greater efforts still; he is most careful to leave nothing undone that will ensure him victory. But how differently we act. In our spiritual warfare, when the tempter comes we listen to, we dally with him; the temptation enters more and more into our minds, enters our hearts, and then we yield. How different would it be if we instantly turned to God and asked His help! Will a mother protect her child when it is in danger? She would be inhuman if she did not. And what is a mother's love for her child compared to God's love for each of us? Ah, He hates sin and loves

us, and if we call upon Him in the moment of danger, in the moment of temptation, He will give us grace with which to resist and vanquish temptation. Need we say more, then, to show that we must pray fervently and continually during temptation?

3. But there are also times when some great and serious trouble comes upon us, and then we are severely tried. It may be the death of a dearly loved friend, a great financial loss, or a long and trying sickness. These may be called continual temptations, for we are apt to murmur, apt to lose patience, to reject our cross, and to seek comfort and consolation in dissipation and sin. The example of our Lord will prove to us that at these times we must have recourse to prayer. Behold our Lord at the Last Supper with His disciples around Him. Try for a moment to grasp some of His thoughts. Well He knew what was before Him, what would happen during the next few hours. No wonder the heart of this "Man of Sorrows" grew weary and sad. Peter would soon deny Him; Judas was even now on the point of betraying Him, and His disciples would soon flee in all directions. Soon to be deserted by men, the hour would come when He would cry out to His Father, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Mark xv. 34). Soon the bolts of heaven were to be loosed, and the thunders of the Father's anger, pent up for ages, were to be hurled upon Him. The guilt and punishment of men's sins were to rest upon His most innocent head. To remove that guilt, to take away that punishment, there was that most dreadful agony in the garden; but was that all! No; there was still a cruel scourging at the pillar, the terrible crowning with thorns, the heavy cross to carry up to Calvary, and then the Crucifixion, with all the dreadful torments and insults that would accompany it. Truly then, as our Redeemer thought of all these things He might well say, as He did afterward, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38). But lo, in the midst of all these thoughts He rises. Whither is He going? To pray, as was His custom. Taking the disciples with Him, He goes to Gethsemani, and leaving them there, He selects Peter, James, and John, and advancing a little farther asks them to watch with Him (Matt. xxvi. 38). Then going a little apart from them, He fell upon His face praying and said, "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39). Three times He prayed, saying the selfsame words (Matt. xxvi. 44). "And [then] there

appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him" (Luke xxii. 43). What a striking lesson for us. Our trials and sufferings can never approach those of Christ, yet when He was in agony He prayed for strength to drink His terrible chalice of suffering and pain. Yet in His prayer there was submission to the will of His Father: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." And again He prayed, not merely once, but three distinct times, He persevered in prayer. Such must be our conduct. When we ask for the removal of sufferings in our time of trial, we must persevere in asking, but our prayers must include submission to God's holy will. If He does not take our pains away, He will send an angel to strengthen us; that is, He will give us grace to bear them patiently, just as He gave His grace to St. Paul, and enabled him to bear the sting of the flesh (II. Cor. xii. 8, 9).

4. Busy with the things of this world, with many of us life is all hurry and bustle, and we attend to the things of heaven only when the things of earth seem to allow it. This is entirely wrong. Our busy, active life in the world must not rule us in the matters that concern our soul's salvation. The latter must be placed first on every occasion, and nothing whatever must hinder the inner, hidden life that should exist between God and ourselves. This inner, hidden life must be a life of continual prayer. And remember that prayer does not always mean that we must kneel or that we must recite pious words aloud. God is a spirit and our souls are spirits, and hence our souls can, even in the busiest places, be communing with God, and speaking to Him. We can ever think of Him, and can ever love Him, and we can speak to Him in our souls, though our lips are silent; our memory, understanding, and will may be ever centered upon, and communing with, God. By degrees this continual prayer unites us more and more to Him, and just as the child, in all its doubts and difficulties, goes to its earthly father for direction and advice, so we go to our heavenly Father, and seek His assistance and guidance in all that concerns us, both in this world and the next. Hence He becomes our Director, our Guide, and our Protector. Hence also our inner and hidden life rules over, and protects us from the dangers of our public and active life. This was the foundation of the sanctity of the saints. They were men and women of continual prayer, and moulded and shaped their lives according to the lights which He gave them during prayer and contemplation. Every thought, word, and deed of theirs was,

therefore, under the divine guidance of their Father. In Him they lived and moved, and had their being (Acts xvii. 28).

II. 1. But besides being prudent in our prayers, the apostle recommends us also to watch in prayer. "Be prudent therefore and watch in prayers." "Be prudent," he seems to say, "and pray always, but at the same time watch over your conduct and see that it be consistent with true prayer." What use will it be for us to pray if our life is such that it hinders God from giving what we ask, or what will it profit us if we squander the very graces we receive in the most reckless manner? But we shall now see that without care and watchfulness this may easily happen. In the Lord's Prayer we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. vi. 10). Now after such words as these, if we were sincere, we would indeed be most watchful and careful to do God's will in everything. Yet, after reciting these words many of us do the very things which are directly opposed to God's will. How strange, how inconsistent is such conduct as this! And in acting thus we give an evil example to others; we often cause them to sin, and, therefore, we hinder them from doing the very thing we prayed for. Such actions seem to point out that we expect God to work great miracles to save us without any effort on our part, but in this we are utterly mistaken. Were we sincere when we addressed this petition to God? When we make our requests known to Him we must be resolved to do what we pray for, or this will render our prayers useless, and make them insults instead of prayers. To us, indeed, might be applied the words, "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Matt. xv. 8). It is very evident that our heart is not in our prayers when we act thus.

2. Again we go to God and say, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Luke xi. 3). In this petition we ask God to supply all our wants, both corporal and spiritual, and we must admit that He does so far more frequently and more abundantly than we deserve. But what do we do with all He gives us? Whilst He gives us health, strength, and opportunity to labor for the food we require, do we take care of our money and use it for that purpose? Alas! no; we waste it by drinking to excess; we do not pay our debts, and thus sin by defrauding others; and in many ways we use our very health and strength in committing sin. As to our spiritual graces, are we any better, do we not also squander them? The question is easily answered by counting the fruits we have reaped from them. What

has been the effect of the many graces received in prayer, have they caused us to change our lives? What about the good inspirations we have had from reading good books and hearing sermons, have we acted upon them? What response have we given to those good thoughts with which He has so often illuminated our consciences? And how have we obeyed the ministers of His Church which He sent to teach us all things regarding our soul's interest? Alas, few, if any, of these numberless graces have produced any fruit in our souls, because we took no notice of them, and thus wasted and squandered them. Had we corresponded with these blessings, they would have drawn down others upon us, and fearful will be the account we must give of them at the moment of judgment.

3. Since we are all sinners (James iii. 2) we ask God to forgive us, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us" (Matt. vi. 12). Now the slightest examination of these words will show that we are making, as it were, an agreement with God. We are asking Him to forgive us provided we forgive others. Some of us are stained with many great sins, and our consciences tell us this, and we know that if we die in them we shall be sent to hell. Others are full of venial sins which must be burned out in purgatory if we die unforgiven. Is it not then a most important thing for us to receive God's pardon whilst on earth? Yet, strange though it be, we sometimes ask our Father, whom we have seriously offended, to forgive us, whilst we do not, and will not, forgive those who we fancy have injured us, or who may have done so slightly. If we will not then carry out our part of the agreement, do we expect God to forgive us? Distinctly Christ says, "If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences" (Matt. vi. 15). How very strange then it is that we should say the Lord's Prayer so often and yet at the same time fail to carry out the conditions it imposes. In doing so we are not gaining grace, but condemning ourselves.

Prayer, brethren, is one of the most important duties and exercises in the spiritual life, hence the apostle's warning. Yet if prudence moves us to pray always, we must also watch and be careful lest our conduct frustrate the very things, the very graces and effects we pray for. Be then most fervent in praying at all times, and especially seek through it spiritual direction. Yet be still more watchful and see that your lives and conduct are not inconsistent

with the petitions you make. Take home then the apostle's words; ponder over them frequently. Often think of what he means when he says, "Be prudent therefore and watch in prayers."

PENTECOST.

THE SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE VERY REV. P. A. SHEEHAN, D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—*The promise of the Spirit a mystery to the apostles.*

I. How He came. The simplicity of the narrative. The importance of the event. The beginning of a new dispensation.

II. The Holy Ghost came to unite Himself with the Church and to perfect its organization. This shown by promises of our Lord. After His Sacred Humanity was glorified, He sent the Holy Spirit to perfect His union with His Church.

III. This union of the Holy Ghost with the Church is perpetual. With individuals it is conditional, but with the mystical Body of Christ it is unchangeable. Testimony of Fathers. Those who withdraw from the Church lose the spirit.

Conclusion.—*The indefectibility of the Church, and the confidence we should have in it on account of the perpetual presence of the Holy Spirit.*

Dear brethren, our blessed Redeemer has returned to the bosom of His Eternal Father. His apostles saw Him ascend, glorious and triumphant, into heaven. Full of sorrow at their bereavement, they returned to Jerusalem to await the fulfilment of the promise He had made when He said to them, "Yet, a little while and the world seeth me no more." "These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you, but the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you" (John xiv. 19, 25). That the words were a surprise and an enigma to the apostles in their unconfirmed state is shown by their exclamation at the end of our Lord's discourse, when, coming out of the darkness and mystery that enveloped Him into the feeble light that surrounded them, He said, "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world, again I leave the world and I go to the Father," and then answered, "Behold, now thou speakest plainly and speakest no proverb". (John xvi. 28, 29). It is evident then the promise of a

Paraclete was a proverb and a mystery to them. He had spoken to them of the Father, and they scarcely comprehended Him; Peter, it is true, had confessed, "Thou art Christ, the son of the living God," but it was not flesh and blood that revealed the mystery of the Incarnation to him. But now another Person was spoken of—a Spirit and yet not the Father, a Spirit of truth that was to teach all things, though their divine Master has already declared Himself to be "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," a Spirit of Truth, proceeding from the Father, and yet not the Son; not begotten like the Son nor made like a creature; a Spirit of Truth, whom the world could not receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him, but who, saith the Lord Jesus, "shall abide with you and be in you" (John xiv. 17).

It is not difficult, dear brethren, to imagine the intense excitement that must have filled the breasts of the disciples during their days of expectation, and the strange fears and hopes the anticipation of the coming of the Holy Ghost must have caused. And, although for the last three years of their lives they had been dealing familiarly with mysteries, the advent of the Spirit must have been awaited by them in great fear as well as in great hope. Their intercourse with their divine Master was very mysterious; they had seen strange things wrought by Him, heard strange things recounted by Him; but, after all, His revelations were visible, and He, though God, was human. But the promised visit was that of a Spirit—the Spirit no less wise, no less powerful than the Son, whom they had seen, and He was to teach them all things, the things that were to come He would show them, and He was to abide with them for ever.

"And when the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were, of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak" (Acts ii. 1-4). There is nothing so striking, dear brethren, in the language of Scripture, as the simple, unadorned way in which it narrates the mightiest events. The building of this world out of nothing is dismissed in the sentence "God created the heavens and the earth." The mighty mystery of the Incarnation is barely hinted at in the Gospel of St. Luke; Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of

the Lord ; be it done unto me, according to thy word," and the angel departed from her ; and if the coming of the Third Person of the Most Blessed Trinity is described with a few details, it must still be said that the language of Scripture is singularly simple, when we consider the dignity of the Person whose advent is announced, the miracle then and there accomplished, and the mighty supernatural creation that then arose, at the bidding of the Holy Ghost, out of nothing.

For what do we commemorate to-day ? Read the narrative of Holy Scripture by the light of the divine Spirit, and what is its meaning ? Whence does this event derive the vast importance which the Church has always attached to it ? From this, that Pentecost means the accomplishment of that mighty work which the Father commenced in creation, and the Son had furthered by His Incarnation—the union of the elect with the Creator by the triple process of creation, redemption, and sanctification. It was not, therefore, a momentary visit of the Spirit of God to sanctify and illuminate a single soul, but the advent of the Spirit of God to reside with the mystic body of Christ, His Church upon earth. It was the commencement of that dispensation under which we live, the dispensation of the Spirit. To the Holy Ghost is committed the office of applying to the souls of men the merits of the Passion and death of our divine Lord, by calling them into the Church of God, by sanctifying them there and glorifying them, and to Him, too, it committed the office of vivifying the mystic body of which Christ is the head, by abiding for ever with it in a union that is absolute and indissoluble, and thus imparting to it qualities which are analogous to His own attributes, the properties of unity, visibility, and perpetuity ; the endowment of indefectibility in life, infallibility in teaching, and authority in governing, and the four notes, unity, sanctity, Catholicity, and apostolicity. To-day we can deal only with the question, Did the Holy Ghost come upon earth to unite Himself to the Church, and is that union perpetual and indissoluble ? The Catholic Church teaches so, and it is shown in two propositions, viz. : The Holy Ghost came to perfect the creation and organization of the Church and to constitute a union between Himself and the mystic body that would be absolute and perpetual. That the Church is the mystic body of our divine Lord is a truth upon which the defenders of the Church, inspired or uninspired, have always insisted. " He gave some apostles," says St. Paul, " and some

prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11). "By doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in him, who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, being compacted and fittingly joined together . . . maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity" (Eph. iv. 15, 16). Writing to the Romans, he says, "For as in one body we have many members, but all members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 4), and writing to the Corinthians, "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or gentiles, whether bond or free; and in one Spirit we have all been made to drink. For the body also is not one member, but many. Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member" (I. Cor. xii. 13, 14, 27). It is evident, however, that although this mystical body was founded by Christ and incorporated with Christ by His own personal work, its perfection was not effected by our divine Lord on earth, but was deferred until He should be glorified in heaven and then was entrusted to the Holy Spirit. It was not fitting that the body should be glorified before the head; but when our divine Lord had taken up His sacred humanity to heaven, and there clothed it with the glory to which its life of suffering had entitled it, then it seemed fit to His infinite wisdom that His Church upon earth should be made participator in His glory. Of this He had given His apostles a pledge, when He breathed upon them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" of this He had given them repeated promises, "I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you forever." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth. He shall glorify me, because he shall receive of mine and show it to you" (John xvi. 13, 14). The eternal Word was begotten of the Father; and He had a temporal mission upon earth to redeem the world and to found His Church, and upon this mission He was sent through the pure mercy of the eternal Father. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." The Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, and He, too, was given a mission in time, to sanctify the world, and to abide in the Church, but He was given not from the pure mercy of the eternal Father, but through the merits of the Incarnate Word, "I will ask the Father, and he shall give

you another Paraclete" (John xiv. 16). And, therefore, it was fitting that until those merits were acknowledged in heaven by the Ascension of our blessed Lord, their effects would not be communicated to earth by the descent of the Holy Spirit. It was only then, when the Head was exalted in heaven, the sacred humanity being enthroned above all creatures, that the organization of the mystical body on earth was completed by the personal advent of the Holy Spirit.

It was, therefore, at Pentecost that those three marvellous unions were perfected, the head, Jesus Christ, with the members, the members with one another, and the Spirit of God, who dwells in the head and members substantially, in forming both into one great mystical body; and this is the reason that the reunion of the Holy Spirit with the Church is not temporary, but eternal and unbroken. Before the Incarnation, the Holy Ghost operated in the souls of men by His graces; after the Incarnation, He has operated in the souls of men by His substantial presence. "Know you not," says St. Paul, "that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I. Cor. iii. 16). Before the Incarnation, He illuminated, sanctified, perfected the elect one by one; but His presence with individual souls depended upon their cooperation with His graces, and their fidelity to His inspirations. Such is still the case with individual souls in the Church. The Holy Spirit may be banished from the soul by assent to mortal sin. His presence in individual souls is, therefore, conditional. But the union of the Holy Ghost with the Church does not depend upon the will of individuals, but on the divine decrees, that have determined that that union shall be unconditional and perpetual. For from what does the union of the Holy Ghost with the Church arise? From the union of the Holy Ghost with the head, which is Jesus Christ, and from His union with the mystical body, which is not an individual, and is, therefore, not dependent upon individual caprice. And, therefore, individuals may dissolve their union with the Spirit of God, and whole countries may fall away from the faith, but the Spirit of God is always united with the body, and as that body is imperishable, it follows that the union of the Holy Ghost with that body is eternal. Hence St. Irenaeus writes, "Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace. But the Spirit is truth, therefore they who do not partake of the Spirit, and are not nurtured into life at the breast of the Church, do not

receive of that most pure fountain, which proceeds from the body of Christ, but dig out for themselves broken pools from the trenches of the earth, and drink water stained with mire, because they turn away from the faith of the Church lest they should be convinced, and reject the Spirit lest they should be taught." And St. Augustine remarks that it is not by accident, that in the Apostles' Creed our belief in the Holy Catholic Church is subjoined immediately to belief in the Holy Ghost. There is a deep spiritual meaning in the collocation of these words, because, as the holy Doctor remarked, "the right order of the confession required that to the Trinity should be subjoined the Church, as the dwelling to the inhabitant, as the temple to the Lord, as the city to the builder." And in another place he says, "For what the soul is to the body of a man, that the Holy Ghost is to the body of Christ, which is the Church. What the Holy Ghost does in the whole Church, that the soul does in all the members of the body. But see what ye have to beware of, to watch over and to fear. In the body of a man it may happen that a member, the hand, the finger, or the foot may be cut off. Does the soul follow the severed member? While it was in the body it was alive; cut off, its life is lost. So a man is a Christian and a Catholic while he is alive in the body; cut off, he becomes a heretic. The Holy Ghost does not follow the amputated limb; if, therefore, ye would live by the Holy Ghost, hold fast charity, desire unity, that ye may attain unto eternity."

One other passage, which is ascribed to the same distinguished saint, "Therefore, the Holy Ghost on this day of Pentecost descended into the temple of his apostles, which He had prepared for Himself, as a shower of sanctification; He came no more as a transient visitor, but as a perpetual comforter and as an eternal inhabitant. He came, therefore, on this day to His disciples, no longer by the grace of visitation and operation, but by the very presence of His majesty; and unto those vessels, no longer the odor of the balsam, but the very substance of the Sacred Unction flowed down, from whose fragrance the breadth of the whole world was to be filled, and by whose doctrine all were to be made partakers of God."

It is evident, therefore, that these two propositions are clearly established, viz.: That the Holy Ghost came on Pentecost to perfect the organization of the Church, and secondly that He has attached Himself to the Church by a permanent union. That as our divine

Lord upon earth was the centre of unity to the Catholic world, which then was limited to the college of apostles, so the Holy Spirit, whom the Son had sent, is now the centre of unity to the Church, which under His protection has developed and filled the entire world. It would be tedious now to enumerate all the privileges that the Church enjoys from the divine Presence. We attribute to the Church many most wonderful gifts, and the world can not deny to the Church the possession of them. It is not in one age alone that her marvellous unity has been a subject of wonder to an unbelieving world; and nineteen centuries of existence, in spite of all efforts to destroy her, has at last convinced the world of her indefectibility in time and the likelihood that she will be changed only to commence a new existence in eternity. Her right to teach the world is tacitly and unwillingly acknowledged by those to whose intellectual pride it is painfully galling; and even they, who will not submit themselves to the sweet yoke of her government, are forced to admit that hers is a rule which is strong without being despotic, and supreme without being tyrannical. Time, the destroyer of all things else, has served in the hands of Providence to consolidate His Church; and the heresies that would have annihilated a human institution have only shown to the world the unity of this divine institution and her power of permanence when weak members were cut away. And thus to those within her pale, she is a visible sign of divine providence; whilst to the world at large that knows not God, she is a miracle, for which human knowledge has not yet been able to account. To us, dear brethren, whose faith in the supernatural is so firm and profound, these things are observed without surprise or suspicion. The perpetual presence of the Holy Spirit, who is all wisdom and all sanctity, is a sufficient explanation of the supernatural character of the Church, and an answer to any doubt that unbelieving men or even our own inquisitive intellects may raise. For the union of the Holy Ghost with the Church is likened to that hypostatic union which binds the humanity of our blessed Lord to His divinity. And so that union of the Holy Ghost with the Church imparts to the Church something of the wisdom and sanctity of God. And as the hypostatic union can not be dissolved, neither shall the union of Church and Spirit. But it shall last through time, and be continued in eternity, when the union of the glorified head and the glorified members shall be completed, and the Spirit shall rest in His work and be glorified in His work forever.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

THE OCTAVE OF PENTECOST

BY THE REV. DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B.

"And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you forever; the Spirit of Truth . . . He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."—John xiv. 16, 26.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *The Octave of Pentecost. Consider the Church as the organ of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is her birthday.*

II. *The change effected by the descent of the Holy Spirit. His abiding presence with her the source of all her attributes and endowments.*

III. *Her unity, (1) visible, according to Christ's plan; (2) perpetual, according to His promise.*

IV. *Her infallibility—perpetual. Heretics appeal to the primitive Church, as if He had left her now. Or they assert His presence in separated, warring "branches." Both are blasphemies against God's promises and against His sanctity.*

V. *Our duty is to love and obey the Church, and make her known.*

The feast we celebrate to-day is not merely the commemoration of the most blessed Trinity, it is also the Octave of Pentecost; and it is under this latter aspect that I wish now to consider it. The feast of the Holy Spirit is, as you know, the second festival in dignity of all the Christian year. And the mysteries it contains are so varied and so magnificent, the lessons it teaches so sublime and so important, that not an octave merely, but a week of years would be insufficient to do more than lightly touch upon some of their more important features.

And so to-day, I would call to your remembrance the one fact that on the feast of Pentecost we celebrate the birthday of the Bride of Christ—our holy mother, the Church.

I. More than eighteen centuries have fled since the day that that upper room on Mount Sion was swayed and shaken by the divine tempest which rushed down from on high, and the brows of Mary and the apostles bore each a lambent flame of supernatural light; more than eighteen centuries since Peter stood up in the midst and spoke his apostolic message to the wondering throng; since the purifying waters were poured forth in divine profusion, so that in one day more than three thousand souls were regenerated and

gathered into the fold of Christ; eighteen centuries of persecution and conflict, triumphs and glories, agonies and defeats, yet still she, our sacred, our beloved mother, who was born in the rushing, mighty wind and in the fiery tongues of Pentecost, lives on her wondrous life of supernatural beauty. Still she teaches us the same old truths she proclaimed at Pentecost by the lips of the first Pope. Still she guides us on our road to heaven; nourishes, cleanses, strengthens us with the same divine sacraments. Still may she be known and distinguished among all nations, among all sects, among all creeds and religions, by all who seek her with humble hearts: the Church Catholic, the spouse of Christ, the kingdom of heaven, the true Sion, the mother of all living!

And the secret of this miracle is the mystery of Pentecost—"I believe in the Holy Ghost;" we say, "the Holy Catholic Church."

II. Think of it, my brethren, a few weeks back, on Easter eve, where was this Church of God? The synagogue had consummated her apostasy, had crucified the Messiah; the apostles and disciples of Jesus were despairing of His cause; only in the immaculate heart of Mary burned steadfast yet the divine light of faith. Mary at that moment represented the Church. A little later, after the Resurrection, one by one, penitent and ashamed, the faithful gathered round their Lord. But during that great Novena in the Coenaculum, which ended so marvelously last Sunday, how many were gathered together in prayer with Mary and with Peter? But a hundred and twenty souls.

Yet no sooner is the Holy Ghost poured forth upon these souls, enlightening, inspiring, enkindling, than the heavenly flame bursts forth from that first sanctuary with a divine impetuosity, and the net of Peter is filled to breaking with the mighty haul of fish; the Church of Christ rushes forward by leaps and bounds to the conquest of the world; the timid, shrinking, faithless disciples are transformed into heroes of lion-like courage, unshrinking constancy, inexhaustible devotion; nothing can affright them, discourage them, overcome them now. Such is the result of the coming of the Paraclete; such the mystery of Pentecost.

The Church of God did not exist in her perfection, in her completeness of organization till Whitsunday. Just as the body is not complete without the soul, which vivifies and quickens it, so with the Church; for the Holy Ghost is to her, as St. Augustine has taught us, what the soul is to the body.

The Church, says St. Paul, is "built together into an habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22). Without the presence of the Holy Ghost within her she could not exist; in Him she lives and moves and has her being. And so it was that our divine Lord promised that the Paraclete should abide with her forever—in *aeternum*. It is from this intimate connection, a real, personal, substantial union, which may even be compared, says Cardinal Manning, with that of the Godhead and the manhood in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the Church's attributes and endowments flow. Her unity, sanctity, perpetuity, infallibility, are a necessary consequence of this presence of the Spirit within her; and it is this which distinguishes her from all other religious systems, and makes her the divinely appointed channel of all God's graces to men.

III. Let us see how this applies to her unity. The Church is one, because the Spirit is one. Because He is forever indissolubly united to her; therefore she can never be torn asunder by schisms, never even for an instant. St. Augustine, after dwelling on this truth, says, "See what ye have to fear. In the body of a man it may happen that a member be cut off. Does the soul follow the severed member? While it was in the body it was alive; cut off, its life is lost. So a man is a Christian and a Catholic while he is alive in the body; cut off, he becomes a heretic. The Holy Ghost does not follow the amputated limb."

Whether it be one unhappy man here and there, or many, even a whole nation all at once, which is thus torn off, it is the same. They are without life, because cut off from the body, which is the organ of the Holy Ghost. Thus you see, dear brethren, it is by no accident that in the Creed we say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church;" the two articles are not thus united without good reason.

"We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5), "for in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (I. Cor. xii. 13). This teaching of St. Paul is as true now, after eighteen centuries, as it was at the time when he wrote. There can be only one true Church, because the one Spirit can not be divided, and the Church without the Spirit would be a body without a soul.

Our Lord has established this unity as a proof to the world of the reality and truth of His divine mission—"that the world may know that thou hast sent me."

And these words of her divine Founder and Head show as clearly that the unity He established was to be no mere hidden interior sympathy of soul with soul, no mere individual connection of Christ with His elect, but a true outward union of the members with one another, and of the whole body with Himself, based on common participation in the same sacraments, common obedience to the same pastors, common profession of the same faith. The Church was compared by Him to a kingdom, a body, a city set on a hill, a light shining from a candlestick and lighting all in the house, just as the prophets had sung of it as the Lord's house set high on the mountains, and as the King's highway so broad and plain that the simple might not err therein, or the wayfarer lose his path. It was then to be a visible organization spread throughout the world; a true body, with many members, and its wondrous unity was to be the sign that should convince the world of the divinity of its founder and the truth of His message.

To see anything less than this would be strangely to misunderstand our divine Saviour's plan of redemption; it would be high treason to Him to suggest either that He knew not what was best, or that He failed in carrying it out.

And as this unity is visible, so it is perpetual, and for precisely the same reason. If the Church's unity could be suspended, even for a moment, if we could see her torn asunder into different branches each separated from the other, it would be clear that our Lord's promises had utterly failed. The unity of the Church, like all her other attributes, flows directly from the nature of God the Holy Spirit, as well as from the promises of God the Son. Again, a soul can not animate two bodies, nor can two rival Churches each possess the indwelling guiding presence of the Holy Ghost.

The conception of the Church given in the popular Anglican hymn,

"By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,"

is unthinkable to the Catholic. If God's Church could be rent asunder she would be no longer God's Church. She is imperishable, because He who dwells in her is God; she is one, because He who is thus indissolubly united to her, is also numerically and essentially one; she is holy because He is the fountain of sanctity; she is infallible because He is immutable and unerring. This union, so intimate, so divine, so necessary, can not be marred by man's sins, any

more than can the holy Sacraments, which ever remain unchangeably pure and divine, even when those who minister and receive them are all in mortal sin.

And as with her unity so with her infallibility—it is perpetual. She can not err because He speaks through her voice. She is as certain now as she was in the time of the apostles, because He can not change. Heretics always appeal to the ancient Church against the living Church, and this appeal alone is a proof of their heresy ; for it practically denies the presence of the Holy Ghost, according to the promises of Christ, abiding in His Church forever.

Besides, who can be certain what the early Church did teach? If the Holy Ghost is no longer in her she is dead ; and there can be no certainty about the teaching of a Church which is dead and gone centuries ago. Only the Church of to-day knows what the Church of old taught, because the Church of to-day is the same as that of old, guided, inspired, directed, dwelt in by the same Spirit.

This then is our answer to those who say that the Church has changed, or erred, and is no longer the organ of the Holy Ghost. They throw the lie in the face of our blessed Lord Himself. They practically deny His Godhead, in refusing to submit to His Church. They deny the Holy Ghost to be God, in daring to suggest that He is liable to change or to repentance. The other alternative which Protestants, especially High Church Anglicans, propose, is even a greater blasphemy against the divine Spirit. The Church still lives on, they say, invisibly one, though outwardly divided into branches, and the Holy Ghost dwells and teaches in each of these parts or branches.

But if so, how is it that we find these so-called branches, the Roman, the Greek, and the Anglican Churches, as they are called, teaching opposite and contradictory doctrines? The holy Roman Church declares, e. g., that the infallibility of the successor of St. Peter is an article of a faith, revealed by God, to be held by all under peril of eternal damnation ; the others deny this ; they would stultify themselves did they not. The Greeks agree with us in proclaiming the dogma of transubstantiation ; the Anglicans declare it to be a “fond thing vainly invented.” The Easterns declare, as we do, that there are seven sacraments ; the Anglicans declare that there are but two.

You see, my brethren, the fearful consequences of such a belief. What ! the Holy Spirit of truth teaching falsehood, black in one

country, white in another! Ah, truly, it is better to believe with others that our Lord's promise has failed (though that be blasphemy) and that there is no more Church of God on earth, than that several rival contradictory religions are each part of the one true Church inspired by the divine Paraclete.

There is then, there can be, but one Church, and she must be infallible in her teaching, visibly one, perpetual to the end of time and to all eternity. But which is this Church; how are we to know it, how distinguish it from the many loud-voiced sects which dispute for our allegiance? The answer is not difficult, for there is but one claimant to this dignity, but one body which dares to proclaim in the face of all the world that she is the only true, infallible, divine Church founded by Christ, vivified by the Holy Ghost, endowed with sanctity, miracles, perpetuity, unchangeableness of doctrine; and that is the Church to which you and I, my brethren, have the unspeakable happiness to belong, the mother of our souls, the guide of our steps, the consoler of our sorrows, the joy and sweetness of our lives, the holy Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church, founded upon Peter, that rock against which the gates of hell shall never prevail, the fruitful mother of all the saints who ever lived, or shall live until the end of time.

But, alas! we know that all do not believe in her, all do not recognize her, bow before her, obey her. And it is the great grief of our lives and the abiding sorrow of our hearts, that the majority of our fellow countrymen ignore her, misrepresent her, or even malign and hate her.

What can we do to show that we at least are faithful, that we at least are loving? The answer is not far to seek. By living lives worthy of her, and by seeking to make her known in all her divine beauty and attractiveness. We have been celebrating during the nine days which elapsed between Ascension Day and Pentecost the novena of the Holy Spirit, at the special desire of that great Pontiff who now sits upon the throne of Peter. He has seen that the time is come to redouble our efforts and multiply our prayers that the world may be brought back to the unity from which it has so miserably strayed. And so he directs our hearts and our prayers to that divine Spirit whose advent we have been celebrating, well knowing that if we besiege the throne of grace with our ardent and united supplications God will not be deaf to our prayers. For the Pope would not have us be content with praying for this great end merely dur-

ing the novena of Pentecost; he wishes us to be instant in prayer at all times and seasons, to be unwearied in our supplications to the Spirit of truth. He it is who inspires these prayers, and presents them ever before the Father with groanings that can not be uttered. Conversions are His work; each one is a most wonderful miracle of His power and His love. He, the *lumen cordium*, He alone can enlighten these poor souls; He alone can show them the lovely vision of His mystical body, in all its ineffable holiness and perfect unity, not with faint, halting words as I have tried to describe it to you to-day, but with illuminations of divine grace, and irresistible promptings of the soul's most hidden depths. He alone can restore the wondrous spectacle of a united Christendom, and He is only waiting for our prayers to hasten to accomplish His work.

Let our prayers be fervent and unceasing; let our personal devotion to this divine Paraclete grow ever more strong, more filial, more perfect; and then indeed we shall be worthy members of that body of which He is the guide, the life, the soul, the creator, and the end.

And with our devotion to Him will grow and deepen and ever become more intense our love and devotion to our dear mother the Church! Oh, how we should love her; how we should cling to her! If we realized what it was to belong to her. Perhaps only those of you who are converts can realize what she is by contrast with what they have left. Oh, the riches of the Church! her inestimable, unspeakable treasures, treasures of sanctity, treasures of peace and ever growing joy as the soul learns to love her more, and ever leaning on her more strongly, knowing her more deeply, finds her perfections more inexhaustible, more wondrous than heart had conceived or eye had seen or ear had heard! And yet, perchance, I am wrong; it is you who have known her from the beginning, who have been brought up at her knee, who have learned from her mouth to lisp your childish prayers, who have seen her beauties unfolding as your mind grew capable of comprehending them, who have never found her fail in sickness or health, sorrow or joy; it is you who know her best, and therefore love her most.

Ah! how can any one be a bad Catholic? How can heart be so ungrateful as to neglect the mother who bore him, to despise her commands, or grudgingly do the minimum of what she requires? Oh let us be more faithful children, more devout lovers of the holy Church. Then will our joy be full when we come to die, and we can say with St. Teresa, "I die a child of the holy Catholic Church."

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

SACRIFICE OF SELF.

BY THE REV. THOMAS F. BURKE, C.S.P.

"In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (Epistle of day.)

SYNOPSIS.—1. As Christ laid down His life for us, we are called upon to give our life for the brethren: a distinctively Christian teaching. 2. The excellence of this sacrifice springs principally from its motive, the love of Jesus Christ. The Incarnation of the Son of God manifesting His love and sacrifice demands these in return from man. 3. Sacrifice of self must be shown not simply on rare occasions, but in our daily life. 4. Apart from the good to others springing from such a life, the individual soul is bettered. Instances of the Priest and the Parent. 5. Characteristics of their lives must, to an extent, be found in the lives of all.

1. St. John, the apostle of love, in to-day's epistle, draws a deep lesson of charity from the death of the Saviour. Our blessed Lord Himself had said: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" and in His willing atonement for sin upon the cross, He gave us the supreme instance of such a love. He fulfilled the word literally. While the apostle indicates a parallel between the sacrifice of Christ and the duty of all Christians, he insists upon it not so much in a literal as in a figurative sense. He tells His disciples—and may we not include all true Christians in that category?—that they, too, ought to lay down their lives for the brethren; but no one will say that by this statement He means that all are called upon to make the sacrifice unto death. He speaks rather in an applied sense. He speaks of that which may be truly called the laying down of one's life for others, namely, the devoting of that life to the interests and the welfare of our fellow beings.

It may be called a heroic doctrine, and yet there is none more distinctively Christian; it may be called, by some at least, an impossible counsel, and yet there is none, among the teachings of the Saviour, more frequently demanded; it may be called a surprising and an exceptional word, and yet there is none plainer in all the Scriptures of the New Testament. Nor are we left without the practical interpretation of this command. Not only St. John, but the other writers of

the word of God also follow simply and submissively the new teaching proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth. We are to lay down our lives for the brethren. This means that we are to devote ourselves to their welfare; that we are to uproot the most pagan of our inclinations; that we are to eradicate selfishness and to supplant it by a fraternal charity that expresses itself in the sacrifice of self. The excellence of such sacrifice springs from its motive and its effects.

2. As St. John indicates, in the words of our text, the true motive of a life given up to the welfare of others, the motive which sanctifies, is the love of Him who first gave His life for us. "The charity of Christ presseth us," wrote St. Paul; and St. Francis de Sales, who loved so strongly, said: "We know that Jesus, the true God, loved us so as to suffer death, and even the death of the cross, for our salvation. Does not such a love put our hearts, as it were, under a press to force from them love by a violence which is stronger in proportion as it is more amiable?" The violence of sacrifice is a violence arising from love, love especially as it is manifested in the central mystery of our religion, the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. In the Incarnation was begun that sacrifice which continued through the life of Christ and reached its culmination on Calvary's summit. For Christ "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."

Should not the thought of this love on the part of God, of a Divine Person taking upon Himself human nature for our benefit and our salvation, coming to lead a life of poverty among men who despised Him, awaken in our hearts the inspiring impulse to not only give something to Him in return, but also to do all we can in behalf of others for His sake? To gain temporal advancement, to gain honor and the love and praise of men, to attain the advantages that riches bring, to satisfy the desires of our senses, even to obtain what will enable us to sin, we make sacrifices greater and more difficult than we are willing to make for Him who loves us with an undying love. We who are willing to give up so much for earthly things can but slightly understand the actions of those who devote their lives to the service of God's poor and afflicted. We but incompletely grasp the motives which inspired such as a St. Vincent de Paul, a St. Francis Xavier, and in our own day, a Father Damien. They were motives of the highest love arising from an appreciation of the fact that in

the Incarnation God united Himself to human nature in and because of love. There is and can be no other explanation. Out of the exuberance of His divine charity He descended to man that man might be raised to God.

St. John realized this great truth. Among the apostles, the Christian mind has accorded him the title of the apostle of love. His love was strong, burning, fervid, but it was also manly. And so his words are the words of a heart without guile, earnest, sincere, truthful, clear as the unclouded summer sky. They come from the soul of a hero. They are the outbursts of one who understood the true meaning of the Incarnation; who understood that it was a union of love, a union in the complete accomplishment of which the lower element, human nature, must make a sacrifice as well as the higher element, the Person of God. For love by its very nature evokes love; sacrifice merits and demands sacrifice in return. The greater, the more sublime, the more undeserved the love shown, so much the greater is the obligation to give a fitting return.

Only Christ indeed can give to our sacrifices their spiritual and heavenly character. Affliction and sorrow are, in themselves, useless; they can not make us better or holier. They make many men morose, selfish, and envious. Affliction, when love is away, leads men to wish that others be afflicted like themselves; it makes them worse rather than better. But when, with the guiding hand of sympathy, Christ leads the soul and allows it to understand and appreciate, to take part in His own trials and sufferings, then mere human affliction and temporal sorrow are transformed into heavenly power and divine strength. Christ leads the soul out into the wilderness, there to realize with Him the secret of love which lightened His fastings and trials; He leads it to the Garden of Gethsemani, there to know what sorrow and pain really are; He leads it to the court of Pilate, there to learn how insult and injury may be cheerfully borne; He leads it along the road to Calvary, to the foot of the cross, there to drink in the ever-flowing stream of Love's sorrow, there to discover how it can make its life, its daily trials and temptations truly Christian, truly Christ-like.

3. Nor must we suppose that this willingness to give of our love is to be manifested on great occasions only. Our Lord Himself has told us the character of the self-sacrifice which He asks of us. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." When disease lays us low upon the bed

of sickness; when dire misfortune paints the day in darkest hue; when the loss of one beloved gnaws at the soul; when business distresses cause temporal misery and want, these are so many golden opportunities, the voices of God bidding us go out, like Abraham, to sacrifice the sweetest, dearest treasures of our hearts. But it is not so much of these great things that St. John speaks. In the spirit of our Lord, he asks for a daily sacrifice, for the giving up entirely of one's life; and when He asks for this, He implies that this sacrifice consists in what we regard as little things. Daily occurrences are not the great and extraordinary ones. How often we say: "Oh, when the time comes I shall willingly offer this and that to God; I shall suffer with promptitude. How often even we may express our readiness to undergo martyrdom, and yet, in the petty trials of every day; in the little temptations that assail us; in the slight tests of love imposed by God; in the inclinations of our nature to anger, to unkindness, to the neglect of others, we go down, as Goliath did beneath the sling of David. Remember, the little things are the tests for the great, and he that fails on small occasions will be found wanting in the day of greater trial. The giving up of our lives is a work of devotion, and true devotion is not spasmodic.

4. In its effects such devotion is not only calculated to work good in the souls of others and for their spiritual and temporal advancement, but it spiritualizes and sanctifies the life of the giver himself. Even in the world, the self-sacrificing man or woman is regarded as the highest and most perfect type of our race. What character is considered more praiseworthy than that of a father, who, despite misfortune and hardship, labors unceasingly for the good of his family? Who so loved as the mother who offers up all the energies of her life in devotion to her child? Where are tears so plentifully and unaffectedly shed as over the fresh grave of an unselfish friend? Even the world pays its homage to self-sacrifice, but the chief element, the sanctifying principle of Christian sacrifice, raises it to a sublimer level than the world's judgment can reach. Humanly, naturally speaking, the efforts put forth for others are good and praiseworthy and even ennobling; but when, back of the work itself, there is the consciousness that it is done for Christ's sake, there enters a sanctifying influence that brings the individual into closer and more intimate relationship with God Himself.

What an element of sanctification then in our daily lives, if we give them for others! Perhaps in no life is the word so fully realized

as in that of the priest. He gives up his life for the people. When the bishop's hands are laid upon him in ordination, he then makes the sacrifice which binds him under obligation for all his days. It is a great offering; but it is one that needs continual renewal in his daily life. Despite all the discouragements with which he meets, despite the misunderstandings and oftentimes the ingratitude of others; but, on the other hand, encouraged by the appreciation of his efforts and the thankfulness of souls assisted, and, above all, by the consciousness of God's all-seeing eye, he labors on. The bond between himself and human souls is spiritual, and begets a spiritual obligation. In the title of father which is accorded him is the sweetest recognition of his position and his work; and at the same time, to himself, it is the severest insistence upon the duty he has taken upon himself. High is his ideal; high and lofty the sacrifice of the true priest, for, in imitation of his Master, he lays down his life for the brethren.

The true parent likewise gives up his life for the brethren in the care he bestows upon those entrusted to him. The closeness of relationship, naturally established, between parent and child in itself calls for a life of sacrifice; but in the Christian idea of the family not only has this relationship been made a sacred one, but it has been broadened and extended. Physical care and worldly advancement were the principal, if not the only, objects of the parent's solicitude until, in the teachings of Christ, it was revealed that the soul was nobler than the body and that true beauty was to be found rather in the spiritual than in the material. The Christian parent will do more for his child than his heathen predecessor. In the toil and love of the father, and especially of the mother, in the sorrowful anxiety that eats into the heart because of a son's or daughter's waywardness, in the constant effort to teach and to guide in the paths of virtue, in the watchings and prayers, of which the world knows nothing, in the appeals that ascend to the heavenly Father, in the grief that is often unto death, how often do we find the accomplishment of that sacrifice, spoken of by St. John, in which life is laid down for the brethren!

5. The characteristics of the true priest and of the true parent should enter into the life of every human being, no matter what his position, or what the sphere of his influence. The same love must move him to extend the helping hand of charity to others who are not joined to him by any special spiritual or physical kinship, for the brethren are all our fellow beings. In a sense the work of charity,

as performed by those who are not obliged by a sense of obligation such as binds the priest or parent, is even nobler than theirs. It is more voluntary and manifests consequently a greater output of spiritual energy. But it is none the less ennobling, none the less necessary, none the less demanded of the true Christian.

We may shrink from the very mention of the word, but it is this spirit of sacrifice, this willingness to give up our lives for others, that makes all our duties easy and dispels our difficulties. It is the quickening life of every Christian soul. For it is the spirit of Christ, and Christ is the strength of man. There is none who does not experience some sufferings, some hardships, particularly in his relations with others. Far be it from us to say that to bear these as Christ would have us bear them is easy. Holy Job tells us that the life of man on earth is a warfare. St. Paul "died daily." The life of a true Christian is a daily cross. To deny oneself, to fight against sin, to labor always for the welfare of others, to keep God and heaven well advanced before the things of time requires a spirit of self-denial, in some things, like unto that which carried the martyrs through their sufferings. It may at first seem hard to give, but when we hasten to offer with willingness, then we realize that Christ's yoke is sweet and His burden light; then the bitterness of sacrifice is swallowed up in the sweetness of love, love for God and His works, love for the happiness of eternity, love for Jesus Christ, who offered up His love for us upon the cross.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

EAGERNESS TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD.

BY THE VERY REV. F. C. DOYLE, O.S.B.

"The multitudes pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God."—Luke v. 1.

SYNOPSIS.—What is meant by "the word of God"? What reasons should call forth eagerness on your part to hear it?

By the "word of God" I do not mean the sacred Scripture; nor the spiritual works of ascetical writers. In this brief discourse I take it to mean the living teaching of the Church as imparted to us in its instructions, sermons, and the like. For Christ sent His apostles and their successors to teach; He promised to preserve them from error; He said that whosoever heard them would hear Him. Therefore, the reasons which should make us eager to hear this "word" are:

(1) *It imparts to us faith. From faith, as from a root, all other virtues proceed. But faith comes by hearing. The word thus heard is a living and life giving word; i. e., giving the life of faith.*

(2) *This word is not only living, but efficacious—pushing men on to action; teaching not only what to believe, but what to do; rousing our torpid wills to act, and inspiring the fear of God, which moves men to act.*

(3) *Besides being living and efficacious, it safeguards the faith which it imparts. That faith is attacked (a) by the devil, who directs against it the written word of unbelievers and the spoken word of scoffers; (b) by the example of unbelievers, who, though without faith, have natural virtues, and apparently do what believers do by the aid of divine grace; (c) by the passions of man's unregenerate nature. To meet and resist these enemies, "the word of God" furnishes us with suitable arms. Its instructions enable us to detect the sophisms of their reasoning—to grasp the proofs which will defeat that reasoning.*

Conclusion.—Therefore, the reasons which should induce you to be eager to hear the word of God are, (1) because it implants in your souls the germ of faith; (2) because it makes that germ produce fruit; (3) because it safeguards your faith by providing you with arms to defend that faith against the assaults of your enemies.

Be eager, then, to hear the word of God and to acquire a clear knowledge of the truths which it teaches. To make that knowledge what God intends it to be, you must come to hear the word of God with the simplicity of children—to learn and not to criticize. This disposition will make you not only hearers but doers of the word.

In to-day's Gospel we read how even the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him to hear Him. And in another place St. Luke tells us that "the multitudes pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God."

Therefore, eagerness to hear and to learn the word of God is the lesson which you are to learn. In order to stir up within you a resolution to take that lesson to heart, I will this morning put before you the reasons which should call forth this eagerness and this zeal. Before so doing it, let me first clearly state what I mean by the word of God. You will, no doubt, surmise that I shall say it is the Sacred Scripture; or, that it is that vast multitude of spiritual works which, in a diluted form, give us the substance of the Sacred Text. These last mentioned works may, indeed, be called the word of God, just as the Scripture is; nevertheless, while not setting them aside, but on the contrary, most earnestly urging you to hear and to heed them, I do not mean them, but rather the spoken word of instruction in the teaching of the Church, whether on morals or on dogma; this it is that I designate as the word of God; for it is so in very deed. In proof of which statement I may recall to your minds the fact that Christ sent His apostles and their successors to teach. In this mission He promised to be with them; to preserve them from error; nay, He went so far as to say that those who should hear them and their

successors should, as it were, receive the word from His own blessed mouth. Therefore, in the instructions of the Church, whether on dogma or on morals, you have the living voice of God. It speaks in His name. Its word is God's word, which you ought to be eager to hear and to learn, the reasons for which eagerness I will here set before you.

1. The instruction contained in the living teaching of the Church is, as St. Paul says, "a living word." Being a living word, it has the power of imparting life to those who hear and accept it. Now, what is the germ of that spiritual life, out of which all further development must proceed? It is faith. From this all other supernatural virtues grow. But whence comes this faith? It comes by hearing; by listening to the living voice teaching, explaining, and proving. When we have laid hold of faith, we possess a treasure without which it is impossible to please God. All natural virtues are valueless for eternal life unless grafted on this faith as on their parent stock. Hence, the first reason for being eager to hear the word of God is that it drops into our souls the germ of faith.

2. Faith, however, though excellent in itself and the root or germ whence spring all other supernatural virtues, is not of itself sufficient to save the soul of a man endowed with responsibility. A faith that is not fruitful in good works is dead. What, then, is it that will make faith fruitful? Once again, it is the word of God, which is not only living, but efficacious. It moves to action. It pushes on and constrains the soul which it has vivified to do good works for the glory of God, the advantage of its neighbor and the health of its own immortal being. It teaches it not only what to believe, but what to do, in order to please God. It teaches us what God has ordered men to do, in order rightfully to worship Him. Again, this knowledge comes by hearing, and the will to put that knowledge in practice is infused into the soul together with the knowledge which hearing imparts.

I appeal to you who hear me. Does not the living voice rouse the torpid will? Does it not awake the slumbering conscience? Does it not inspire that saving fear which is the beginning of wisdom and which causes the soul not only to believe, but to make that belief practical? Again, I appeal not only to your personal experience, but to the history of nations. These peoples to whom the word has been preached, and who had previously been seated in darkness, in the shadow of death, and plunged in the mire of degrading vices, were

by the living, efficacious word of God roused to cast aside their darling vices and to live lives of holiness and justice. Christian Europe of the present day is one of the outcomes of the preaching of the word of God.

3. Besides infusing into the soul the life germ of faith and fostering that germ till, putting forth all the energy that is in it, it blooms into the practice of Christian virtue, the word of God, the living, efficacious word, has a further power, the power of safeguarding the precious faith which it imparts. Does faith need safeguarding? Undoubtedly it does. For, if it be the source of our spiritual life and action, the means by which we are able to please God and to win eternal life, it will naturally be an object against which the enemies of God and of man will direct all their malignant hatred. God leads men to faith and to holiness by the living word or teaching of His Church. The arch-enemy of God, in a certain sense mimicking the action of God, endeavors to destroy men by a word. As with God's word, so also with the devil's word; it is at one and the same time a written and a spoken word. The devil assails the precious germ of faith by the one and by the other. First, by the written word. In this age, the number of writers is, in a sense, infinite. Pamphlets, leaflets, magazines, newspapers, and books pour forth from the press in a stream that seems to be inexhaustible. It is rare that the men who produce these of set purpose attack in them either faith or morals. At least it is so in this country. Nevertheless, in their antagonism to the Catholic Church, their blows are indirectly aimed at her faith and at her teaching. By insinuation, by allusion, by covert sneer or by ignorant perversion of facts, they manage to pelt mud at her, and in this way to discredit her not only with her own children but with those who, though not of her fold, yet have for her those sentiments of respect and admiration begotten of her past history and of her glorious achievements in the centuries that have rolled on since Christ, the Head, died on Calvary. The reading public, and in these days almost every one reads, meets with these attacks in the most unexpected places. They are made in writings in which their presence is uncalled for, in which they appear to have been dragged in, and, though in the Catholic heart they excite disgust and righteous indignation, yet they leave a stain upon the mind even if they do not sow in it the germ of doubt and of unbelief. Not content with making use of the written word, the enemy of God stirs up those who are hostile to the Church to speak against her, and thus

to make use of the powerful spoken word as an engine for her destruction. Though these men are, as a general rule, quite incompetent to give an opinion, or to argue logically on matters of dogma or of philosophy, of history or of morality, yet they will speak, and some of them are bold enough even to write. Often enough it is in coarse ridicule, or in garbled history, or in calumnious assertions against the pastors and the teachers of our faith. This spoken and this written word are very active and dangerous enemies of that precious faith sown by the living and efficacious word of God. But there are other enemies which, if not active assailants of it, yet in a negative way are almost as efficient. One of these is the example of men who are without faith and who openly make profession of holding all religious beliefs in equal contempt. In spite of their unbelief, these men may be, to the eyes of their fellow men, upright, honorable, truthful, philanthropic, and moral. These, their natural virtues, may make them so lovable that to weak-kneed Christians they may become a stumbling-block, for, looking upon them, they will say, "These are all that we profess to be and they are what they are without that faith which, we are told, is essential to morality, which is the root of morality, its strength, its life."

To add still more weight to the side of the devil, there are the animal instincts of unregenerate nature. These are so powerful, so restless, so importunate in their craving for forbidden fruit that they urge men to question the truths of faith and the binding force of the laws which rest upon it.

With these enemies of faith before your eyes, it will be evident to each of you how necessary is the protective power of the word of God, or, in other words, how efficacious it is to furnish you with arms wherewith to defend yourselves against these enemies and to teach you so skilfully to use them as to render the attacks of your foes quite innocuous. For he who listens to that living word, who receives into his mind the instruction which it imparts, an instruction by which the dogmas and the practices of his Catholic faith are established and defended, will know how to meet and to scatter to the winds all the miserable sophisms of the Church's enemies. He will have acquired a clear knowledge of what his faith teaches. He will have grasped the proofs which make it evident. He will be able to see at a glance when his adversaries are making gratuitous assertions, and he will sweep them aside as futile irrelevancies. He will be able to detect the neatly dressed up lie, the bold, shameless calumny

so circumstantially recorded. He will then have at hand an intelligent, convincing answer to give to those who interrogate him concerning the faith that is in him. His knowledge will enable him not only to meet the written and the spoken word hostile to his faith, but to keep in check his own animal nature and its unruly passions which rebel with so great emphasis against the teaching of his faith and the restrictions which that teaching puts upon them. Therefore, the reasons why you should be eager to hear the word of God, to understand it, to learn it, are because it implants in you the germ of faith; it has the efficacy of making that faith fruitful; and it provides you with arms to defend it against the assaults of your enemies.

Conclusion.—Let me, then, exhort you with all the earnestness of one who has at heart your eternal interests, to stir up within yourselves an eagerness to hear the word of God. By this eagerness I mean, of course, a zeal not only to hear it, but to acquire as clear and deep a knowledge of the truths of your holy religion as your capacity will admit. In order, however, that the knowledge thus acquired may be to you all that God intends it to be, you must come to the learning of it with the humility and the simplicity of little children. I say to the learning of it; for you must come to receive knowledge, not to object against and to criticize the doctrine set before you. If studied and learnt with these dispositions, the lessons of your faith will reveal to your minds the light of God's truth; they will touch your hearts and open them for the reception of all Christian virtues; they will fill you with so reverential and filial a fear of your Creator that you will put in practice His divine law; you will become doers and not merely hearers of that living, efficacious word which is able to save your souls.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

ACTUAL GRACE.

BY THE REV. W. GRAHAM.

"Without me you can do nothing."—John xv. 5.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *Grace. What? actual and habitual. Our daily need of actual grace. Comes to all. As wind and rain and sunshine in world of nature; so grace in world of spirit. Reaches us in form of inspirations, warnings, lights, attractions to piety and aversion to sin. St. Augustine. St. Ignatius.*

II. *Mode of action. Does not destroy or change nature. Raises it—perfects and directs it. St. Peter. St. Paul. St. Mary Magdalen.*

III. *Need of grace. Fall of man. Corruption of sin—weakening of natural power for good. Double element—double spirit striving for mastery in human heart. "I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind. . . . Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 23, 24). Grace alone can do it.*

Conclusion.—Prayer main channel of actual grace; exhort to prayer and correspondence with grace when offered.

The miracle of the draught of fishes narrated in to-day's Gospel is an indication of the truth that the conversion of souls depends not on the words of human wisdom or on any earthly means, but upon the power and grace of Jesus Christ. As our Lord says elsewhere, "Without me you can do nothing," and St. Paul says: "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish" (Phil. ii. 13). In the supernatural order man without grace is like a bird without wings or a ship without a rudder, rendered motionless and powerless. Grace is as needful to his soul as light and air and food are to his body.

In the broad sense of the term all the free gifts and blessings of the Creator, such as life, health, fortune, and the rest may be called graces; but we now speak of the grace of God in the religious or supernatural meaning of the term—in which sense it is either habitual or actual. Habitual grace is the gift that reconciles us to God; makes us His friends—nay, His very sons and heirs. This is what we mean when we talk about being in the state of grace. But over and beyond this permanent, abiding grace that forms the very life of the soul, we constantly need what is called actual grace. We all daily need help and strength to conquer temptation—to keep God's

holy law, to persevere in habitual grace—in short, to lead a good, holy Christian life. It is not enough to be alive. We need something to support life. So even though possessing divine or supernatural life in habitual grace, we need actual grace to support and preserve and strengthen. It is to this phase of divine grace that I shall here call attention.

I. Now, just as God makes His sun to shine and His gladdening rain to fall on just and unjust alike, so in His mercy is He ever pouring out this grace in abundant streams on all men—good and bad, saints and sinners. According to their needs and habits, it comes to men in various forms—inspirations, warnings, sudden flashes of spiritual light. It comes to sinners, to rouse and convert them from their evil ways; to the just and God-fearing, to intensify and increase and strengthen their virtue. When St. Augustine, still a slave to vicious habits, heard a mysterious voice commanding him to take up the book of the Gospels and read, and hit upon the text that finally determined his conversion—this was a form of actual grace. And again, when St. Ignatius of Loyola, lying wounded in the castle of Pampeluna and leisurely reading the lives of the saints, felt suddenly overpowered by a strong impulse to devote his life in a special manner to the service of God, he was under the influence of actual grace. When we say with holy David (Ps. cxviii.), “Incline, O Lord, my heart to avoid evil and do good,” we pray with him for actual grace, that light of the mind, that touch of the heart, so needful to enable us to act and think as we ought. When in sickness or misfortune we are reminded of our frail hold on life and impelled to make a better use of what remains; when a friend or acquaintance is suddenly called before his Maker and a warning voice tells to put our own house in order; when a word is dropped in a sermon or uttered in the confessional that sounds like a message from heaven, all these are actual graces, on the use or abuse of which our very salvation may hang. If St. Paul, or St. Augustine, or St. Ignatius had persistently refused to pay heed to God’s call, their lives would have had a very different ending. Indeed, we may say that the great difference between notorious evil-doers and good Christians lies in the good or bad use of their actual grace. Like the sower of the Gospel, God is ever casting good seed into the soil of the human heart; and it depends on us whether this good seed takes root and grows up into orderly habits of virtue or gets choked and lost amongst the weeds of vice.

II. But it may be said: Is not rational nature, with its lofty aspirations and high tendencies, enough to check vice and evil? Yes; as it came from God, but not as corrupted in the fall. Grace is a needful remedy against disease. By its action it neither changes nor destroys nature. It acts as refinement or education does on the mind, or as good tillage or careful cultivation on a garden or farm. St. Peter remained as impetuous, St. Paul as zealous and fiery, St. Mary Magdalen as tender-hearted in the service of our Divine Master as they had been in the service of His enemies.

III. That we ever stand in need of God's holy grace our own life-long experience amply proves. Who does not feel a double power, as it were, striving for the mastery in our hearts—a good spirit and a bad one—the spirit of God and the spirit of Satan? Each one of us can truly say with St. Paul: “I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. vii. 23, 24.)

We, too, may say which element will prevail in the heart!—which power will gain the upper hand in the moulding of our conduct. Be assured, and indeed we all feel it, that the grace of God can alone enable us to keep down the evil spirit within us—can alone help us to follow the better instincts of our nature. That same apostle who declared that of himself he could not even think a good thought or worthily pronounce our Lord's name, yet says that with the grace of God he can do all things. “I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me” (Phil. iv. 13), and the secret of his holy life he thus discloses: “By the grace of God I am what I am” (I. Cor. xv. 10); and when he prayed earnestly to be delivered from the spirit of impurity that tormented him, the answer he received was, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (II. Cor. xii. 9). Look at King David. With the grace of God he was a saint and a prophet, without it a murderer and an adulterer. Look at Solomon, yielding mind and heart to influence of grace, he was a model to mankind of piety and wisdom. Resisting and discarding it, he grew a sensualist and an idolater. Indeed, there is no moral depth to which a graceless and God-abandoned soul will not sink; and we have only to look abroad in the world around us to see this verified. Nor can we wonder, taking into account the perils to which the soul is exposed. “Who, then, can be saved?” we may well say with the Jews on hearing our

Lord discourse of the difficulty of walking in the straight and narrow path of holy living. But His answer is at hand to encourage us: "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God." Herein lies the secret of a good life in evil surroundings. The power of God ready at our call in holy grace. For grace is like the arm of the Most High, ever stretched out in support of weak and sinful man—holding him up as St. Peter was held up on the Sea of Galilee despite the wild, treacherous elements around. Well might the Psalmist say: "The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? . . . If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear" (Ps. xxvi. 1). Without the Divine help of grace we are, in the spiritual order, sick of the palsy, deaf, dumb and blind; but fortified by it, we arise and walk, we see and hear and are attentive to the things of God. Like faith, it will move mountains from the path of our salvation. If only we correspond to our grace—use this gift of God aright—there is no duty howsoever hard and disagreeable that we may not fulfil, no sin that we may not avoid, no virtue that we may not practise, no vicious, bad habit that we may not uproot, no height of perfection that we may not reach, no victory that we may not gain over the enemies of our soul. Therefore, I say, in our conflict with evil, in our endeavors to walk morally straight in life, let us repeatedly ask of God His strengthening grace. Prayer is the great channel of actual grace. "If thou didst but know," said our Lord to the Samaritan woman at the well, "thou wouldst have asked to drink of this water" (John iv.). In trial, in temptation, in weariness ask for this refreshing water that springeth up into eternal life. When you say your night and morning prayers, when you assist at Holy Mass, or visit our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, crave earnestly for all the graces you stand in need of. Grace may be had for the asking. "Behold," says our Divine Lord, "I stand at the door and knock; if any one hear my voice and open to me the gate I will come to him." And, besides constantly praying for grace, we must cooperate with it when offered. God will not force either Himself or His gifts upon us—nay, as a chastisement He may withdraw it, as He did from the overweening and self-confident Jews.

Let us, therefore, use well the measure of grace allotted to us, remembering the parable of the talents and what befell him who buried his share in the ground. Grace disregarded is as bad as no

grace. A shield, a weapon, a staff, hands, feet, or wings are of no avail to those who refuse to employ them. Therefore, despise not the gift of God. Use it, tend it in the heart so that it may grow up into the fulness and richness of a virtuous life on earth and a glorious and happy life in eternity.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR.

“Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble. Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.”—I. Peter iii. 9, 10.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—I. Rules to guide us in loving our neighbor.
1. We must love him because God loves him. 2. We must love him as we love ourselves. 3. We must love him as we wish him to love us.
4. We must love him as Christ has loved us.

II. We must bear with our neighbor's offences against us. 1. We must be patient and meek with him. 2. We must be merciful toward him. 3. We must be humble and bear with him. 4. We must forgive him if we wish God to forgive us.

Why, my brethren, do we so often hear people bewailing the miseries of life and complaining so much about the terrible unkindness of others? It is because men are selfish and do not practise as they should do the great virtue of fraternal charity; on the contrary, they are proud, angry, and unmerciful, caring little for any one but themselves. How different all this would be were men and women to follow the advice given by St. Peter. Then this earth would become a paradise, and contentions, hatred, strifes, and such like, would soon vanish from the land. But just because men do not follow the apostle's teaching in this matter, there is a great deal of discord and want of harmony in the world, and life is much more trying and miserable than it need be. With a view, then, to see how far we are deficient in this matter, we may briefly ponder over and study the apostle's words.

I. 1. To love is natural to man, but his love must be centred on its proper objects, and the Gospels tell us what these objects are; God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves. Now because God is our Creator, men know that they ought to love and serve Him, but some are not so clear about loving their fellow-man, and hence

we hear: "Why must I love my neighbor? What claim has he upon me?" It is almost impossible to analyze Christianity without being surprised at the wonderful, nay, infinite, love of God for man. Who can measure for us the height, the depth, the length and breadth of that love? Everlasting in duration, limitless in extent, high as the bliss of heaven, it has descended to the awful sufferings of the cross. The tone of the Inspired Writings, the framework of the Church, the graces of the Sacraments, and every precept and decree found in our holy religion, all speak of this love, all testify of this love, as being the tool or instrument that gave them life and form, that made Our Father promulgate them. Every detail in the world's history proves this to be the case, and if we follow the steps of the human family from the Garden of Eden to the present moment we must notice how often love has put mercy forward into the place of stern justice and spared men when they deserved punishment. God made man not because He necessarily required his services, but because He is Infinite Goodness. He created man to share with Him the bliss and happiness of heaven. Little wonder then that the saints have written and said so many beautiful things about this great and astounding love of God for man. Now if God so loves man, how can we really love God without at the same time loving our neighbor? Can we love the one without loving the other? No. Christian charity tells us most distinctly that we must love God first and above all things, and then our neighbor for God, and in God; and no man can do this who separates the one love from the other. To love another in God is simply to love that person because God loves him. The love of God then and the love of our fellow man go together. We do not truly love the one unless we love also the other. The one flows from the other, and he who would truly love God must also love his neighbor. The two great precepts which sum up the whole Law and the Prophets are: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul. And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Cf. Matt. xxii. 37-39). See, then, why we must love our neighbor. He is God's child, and God loves him with an everlasting love, and we therefore must love him for this very reason. Were he not by creation a brother of ours, were not his good qualities to be esteemed as much as we esteem our own, did we owe him no debt of gratitude for his kindness to us, there is still this great motive, this great reason, he is a child of Our Father, and if we love Our Father, we must love His child also.

2. So earnest was our Lord that we should be charitable to our fellow man that He has given us rules and directions with regard to it which will save us from all mistakes and excesses if we follow them. The first rule says: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 39). Now, if we look into our hearts we will find that one great feature in our love for ourselves is that of sincerity. For this love is not superficial, but is real and comes from the very depths of our hearts. It is stamped on every action of ours, and there is nothing empty or sentimental about it, for it is most genuine, strong and sterling, and touches us at every point. Carry this sincerity then into your love for others. Do not let it be a dead, lifeless thing, like a body without a soul. Let it come out and show its real nature, let it be an earnest and practical love.

Tenderness is another feature in our love of ourselves. This makes us most sensitive to every evil that happens to us, and we magnify our troubles, and seek for sympathy, and are hurt if it is not given to us. A kind word relieves us, and raises the cloud that hangs over us, whilst a kind deed makes life more than tolerable. This tenderness, then, we must infuse into our love for our neighbor, and bewail his misfortunes as though they were our own. We hide our own faults from those we love, and charity should make us blind to the faults of our neighbor; and should hinder us from watching him, criticising and calumniating him. Nay, if we know his faults, we must excuse them, and if we can not excuse the act, we must excuse the intention; and if both are evil, we must bear them patiently. For, "charity is patient, charity is kind," and if we act not thus, we do not love our neighbor as ourselves, we do not love him truly.

3. A second rule Christ gave us is: "All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them" (Matt. vii. 12). Now there are few things which educate a man more than comparisons, especially when one thing which he compares is thoroughly known to him. In fact, our minds exercise themselves a great deal in this manner. But a man most certainly knows how he would like others to treat him, and he therefore most quickly learns how he must treat others when he is told to act toward them as he would have them behave to himself. Knowing this, then, do we obey this second rule? Do we probe our hearts and ask such questions as these: "Should I like another to watch me and reveal my hidden faults after he has magnified them? Would I like my neigh-

bor to treat me rudely and unkindly, and to have no pity for me when I am in trouble? Would I like him to hoard up riches, when I am hungry and naked?" Ah, when we ask these questions our hearts answer that we would not like such treatment to be meted out to us. But does not our conscience accuse us of acting toward our neighbors precisely in this manner? It is time then that we changed, time that we altered our conduct, and taking this rule to heart, treated others as we wish them to treat us.

4. Another rule is, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John xv. 12). There can be no two opinions as to how Our Lord loved us. He Himself has measured that great love for us when He said, "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). Few indeed will ever be called upon to go so far, but we know how fully Our Saviour verified His own words. The crucifix alone will proclaim this to us, and all the wounds upon His Sacred Body seem like so many mouths speaking of His wondrous love for men. But what return did men make to Him? Throughout His life they persecuted Him, they called Him names, they bore false witness against Him, they prepared the scourge for Him, they crowned Him with thorns, and in the end put Him to death upon the gibbet of the cross. Behold your great model in fraternal charity. "Love one another as I have loved you." Christ loved all, He died not alone for His friends, but even for sinners, His enemies. We must love in the same way. We must love all without exception, nay, we must love and bear even with our enemies. See to what a sublime height our love for our neighbor must rise, to what extent it must go.

II. 1. But the apostle not only tells us to "love the brotherhood," but also to be "merciful, modest, humble," and not to return "evil for evil," nor railing for railing, "but contrariwise blessing." In other words we are told that when our neighbor offends us, we are not to retaliate nor revenge ourselves, but to bear patiently with his offences. Now modesty will help us to do this. No doubt we have at times met with a class of men who have a very high idea of their own power and talents. Such men are forever busy making inquiries about things which do not concern them, and are always giving advice which has not been asked for, whilst they order about those who are in no way subject to them. Though they are not noted for anything great, yet they are haughty, imperious, noisy, meddling, interfering people, who seem as though they want to rule the world.

Now the modesty spoken of here by the apostle is just the opposite to all this. The modest man is diffident of his own powers, he does not meddle or interfere with other people's affairs, he simply minds his own. Since people will not be interfered with, and bothered by those who have no rights over them, they often resent interference and become angry, and thus trouble, quarrels, angry feelings which injure if they do not destroy fraternal charity, is the result. Be careful then to be diffident in yourself, mind your own affairs, and leave other people's alone. Cultivate this modesty, practice it in public life, for it is our duty then to cultivate this virtue and to exhibit meekness to all men, but especially to those who injure us in any way.

2. Mercy is another virtue which we must exhibit toward our enemies. It is Godlike and Our Father continually exercises it toward us. To sinners, who were wretched, miserable, and only worthy of the severest punishment, He has exhibited it in an infinite degree. To be like Him, to love others as He wishes, we must also be merciful. What profit do we derive from revenge, from retaliation? If we look closely into the matter we must see that we have only gratified our own base self-love. It does not make society or the world better to seek revenge, to retaliate and injure those who have offended us. And more than this, spiteful people when they retaliate generally do far more harm to, and nearly always inflict a far greater injury upon others than that which was inflicted upon themselves. The fire of anger, and malice, enkindled by some slight offence, often deals a blow fatal to the life or welfare of the man or woman who perhaps offended us accidentally.

3. Humility also in a wonderful way helps us to bear with the affronts of others. For the proud man exalts himself and wishes others to bow down and cringe before him. But this is precisely what people will not always do, and hence many quarrels. The humble man, on the contrary, knowing that he is a sinner himself, and realizing that he has many faults which others have to bear with, is not averse to suffering patiently when injuries are inflicted upon him, nay he takes them often as a cross sent by God to punish him for his sins. Be careful then not to domineer over others, not to direct them to act just as you like; neither think that you are a superior person to them all, for such a spirit will cause you, not to bear with others, but to retaliate and seek revenge. This, as we know, is contrary, is entirely opposed to fraternal charity.

4. Christ has distinctly forbidden us to return evil for evil, injury

for injury. "I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you" (Matt. v. 44). And not only does Our Lord speak thus, but He commands us to forgive, in such a manner that His forgiveness of our sins is conditional. By this we mean that unless we have pardoned from our hearts those who have injured us He will not forgive us. "If," He says, "you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences" (Matt vi. 15). Do we then want God to forgive us our sins? If we do, we must forgive those who offend or trespass against us. This decree of God is most proper and right, and even the most wilful can not contradict it. Can anything be more just than that God should treat us precisely as we treat others? If He forgives us just as we forgive others, if He avenges Himself upon us when we avenge ourselves upon others, is not this just? He is a God of infinite majesty and power, and who is it that offends Him? His own creatures, after He has showered down upon them countless favors and graces. And they offend Him grievously and seriously, and this offence deserves the pains and tortures of hell. And shall we then who are sinners, and therefore evil, not forgive another poor sinner when he offends us in a small matter? If we do not and will not forgive, why then should God forgive us our fearful crimes? And if we pretend to forgive, and yet will not love those who offend us, why should God forgive us and love us any more? Why should He not hurl us into hell? If we are to be forgiven our offences, then, we must also forgive our brother. The parable of the wicked and unforgiving servant is very clear. This man owed his lord a large sum of money, but when asked the king forgave him the debt. Going out he meets a fellow-servant who owed him a small amount, and he will not forgive, but has his fellow-servant cast into prison. The lord hears of this, and recalling him, has him sold into slavery, and our hearts tell us that the king acted rightly. Christ concludes the parable with most significant and impressive words: "So also shall my Heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts" (Cf. Matt. xviii. 23-35).

Fraternal charity, brethren, is necessary for salvation, and yet what do we see so much of in the world as pride, revenge, hatred, detraction, and calumny, vices which are entirely opposed to the love of our neighbor, without which we can not enter heaven? Examine your souls, then, and see if these vices reign in your hearts. If they do, you do not love your neighbor, you are not obeying the

second great commandment. Unless you alter them, unless you change in this respect, and love your neighbor and forgive him when he offends you, do not for a moment expect that God will forgive you, for He has distinctly said He will not. Be careful then to listen to St. Peter, who says: "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble. Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing."

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR DEVINE, PASSIONIST.

"I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat."—Mark viii. 2.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—On two occasions our Lord miraculously multiplied loaves and fishes to feed the people. The points of difference to be noted between the two miracles. The miracles themselves show that God provides for our temporal as well as for our spiritual wants.

1. God is the giver of all temporal as well as spiritual favors. Some temporal benefits enumerated. They come from God. In granting them He may use ordinary and natural means or extraordinary and supernatural means. The Lord may take away as well as give—the example of holy Job.

2. How we should ask for and use temporal things. It is lawful and a duty to pray for such things according to the words: Give us this day our daily bread. The dispositions with which devout souls pray for and expect miracles. These should not be expected without grace and sufficient reason. The manner in which we should pray for and value the gifts bestowed upon us by the ordinary providence of God for the relief of our daily wants both of soul and body.

Conclusion.—Some considerations to guide us as to the manner of praying for and making use of temporal goods and blessings.

The miracle of this day's Gospel is also mentioned in the Gospel of St. Matthew, and it is different from that mentioned in other places by the four Evangelists, the account of which is read from the Gospel of St. John on the Fourth Sunday of Lent. This difference may be noticed in the following particular points: On the occasion referred to in to-day's Gospel the people had been with Our Lord upward of three days, a point not noticed on the other occasion. Seven loaves are now distributed and a few fishes, then there were

five loaves and two fishes. Four thousand are fed on this occasion and five thousand on the former occasion, and on this occasion seven large baskets are filled with fragments and on the former occasion twelve small baskets. I may notice also the effect on the crowd. When the first miracle was wrought the people would have taken Our Lord and made Him king. When this miracle was wrought it appears that they permitted Him to leave them without any demonstration. Without any further distinction between the two miracles let us take the multiplication of the loaves and fishes in itself, and consider that Our Lord on two occasions performed a miracle of this kind. This shows us that God provides for our temporal as well as for our spiritual wants, and that we should look to Him for all temporal blessings and favors, and receive them as coming from His hands. To this end I shall ask you to consider two things in connection with this miracle.

1. God the Giver of temporal as well as spiritual favors.
2. How we should ask for and make use of these favors.

1. God the Giver of temporal as well as of spiritual favors.

By temporal favors or blessings I mean all those things that contribute either to our being or our well-being in this life, such as food, clothing, habitation, health, credit, reputation, friends, joy and comfort, length of days, and the like. God is the Giver of all these things whenever they can benefit us, and whenever they can be a blessing to us and in so far as they are necessary for us. Thus it is said in the Book of Proverbs: "The blessing of the Lord maketh men rich" (Prov. x. 22). And in the Book of Job we have the following expressions used to signify blessings: "Thou shalt be hidden from the scourge of tongues," and "the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding." The first of these has reference to credit and reputation and the second to our gifts or talents. It is in this sense we have to understand the words of our Divine Saviour when He says: "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat: and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor gather into barns: and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? . . . Be not solicitous, therefore, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Heavenly Father knoweth that you

have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you " (Matt. vi. 25-33). We are thus reminded of the providence of our Heavenly Father, that He knoweth all our wants and that He has sometimes even departed from the ordinary course of His providence to supply the wants of His people by miracles. The divine wisdom can procure for us and supply all those temporal and necessary things either by natural and ordinary means or by supernatural operation, and to both our attention should often be directed. Because as we are rational creatures, created for God and destined for an eternal inheritance, all things here below are ordained for our happiness; namely, for procuring moral good and preventing moral evil, and these are objects truly worthy of the Divine interposition even by miracles.

As Bishop Hay writes (Bishop Hay on "Miracles," chap. iv.): "To us, it does not belong to judge what are the most proper means to be employed, whether natural or miraculous. To God they are both equally easy, and the Christian religion assures us that sometimes He uses one and sometimes the other—sometimes He procures the sanctity and perfection of His servants (and we may add their temporal health, happiness, and well-being) by ordinary and natural means, and sometimes He employs miraculous and extraordinary means for this purpose, as He in His wisdom judges proper. But it can not be denied that it is most becoming the divine goodness and wisdom to use means for attaining His views which are most proper and conducive thereto. . . .

"It is a most incomprehensible effect of the divine power and goodness to multiply a few grains when sown in the earth to such an amazing quantity of corn as to afford food for thousands, but being used to see this every day we think nothing of it, and seldom or never take occasion from it to conceive in our hearts suitable affections to the great Author of so stupendous a benefit. But were these natural and ordinary means to fail, as in time of famine, and should God then, by His almighty power, multiply a handful of meal in our granaries so as amply to supply our wants till plenty should return to the land, what sentiments would this excite in our hearts! What admiration, what thanks, what gratitude, love, confidence, and the like! And why? Not because the latter is more difficult to God than the former, or a greater effort of His power—not because it is more wonderful in itself—but because it is uncommon,

more strikingly shows the hand of God, and makes us more sensible of His divine presence and power, and of His infinite goodness toward us." We are to remember not only that it is God who gives but that it is He also who taketh away. This truth may be brought home to us by the example of holy Job. According to the Scriptural account Job was free from all wickedness, not only in act but in thought, yet when Satan stood before the Lord, and being asked if he had considered the virtues of Job, he made answer that Job was just because the Lord had prospered him, but that he would depart from justice if he fell into troubles. He obtained permission to make trial of the virtues of Job, provided he did not hurt or injure him in his person. Upon this the Sabeans entered the land of Job, slew his husbandmen, plundered his cattle, fire fell from heaven and consumed his sheep, three bands of Chaldeans carried away his camels, and his sons and daughters, feasting in the house of their elder brother, were killed. When Job had said in his sorrow, that he had come naked out of his mother's womb, and that naked he should return, and had blessed God who had given him all things, and had taken all things away, Satan stood again before the Lord, and being asked if he had admired the patience of Job in so many and so great afflictions, he answered, that man would give everything for his life, insinuating that if Job's life were endangered he would fall away from God. The Lord permitted him to afflict Job still further, only he must spare his life. Upon this he was afflicted with ulcers. To this were added the rebukes of his wife and the reproofs of his friends, who accused him of sin, and advised him to return to God by penance, and humbly to acknowledge the divine justice. In the midst of all these sufferings and privations Job extols God's power and wisdom, saying: "With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. If he pull down, there is no man that can build up: if he shut up a man, there is none that can open. If he withhold the waters, all things shall be dried up: and if he send them out, they shall overturn the earth" (Job xii. 13-15). Afterward Satan was withheld from inflicting further evils upon him; his worldly substance was doubled, sons and daughters were born to him, and God granted him a happy death. It is true, dear brethren, that we are commanded to seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and if we do so, then we have the promise that all other things will be added unto us, nevertheless we should remember the order in which Divine Providence deals with us. He

has given us life and the necessities of life, with the purpose of bestowing upon us spiritual and heavenly blessings as an accession and supernatural addition to all the natural good things that we obtain from Him. We should therefore regard them in this light that through those sensible and temporal gifts our minds may be raised in gratitude to God as the Giver of all good things on whose beneficent providence we entirely depend in regard to both our temporal and eternal interests.

2. How we should ask for and use temporalities.

We learn from our Saviour's miracles and from the words of the prayer which He taught us—Give us this day our daily bread—that we should have recourse to God in our temporal as well as in our spiritual necessities. It therefore follows that we not only may but we ought to pray to God daily for everything we need for both soul and body. When pious people pray to God to aid them in all their necessities, great and small, temporal and spiritual, it must not be supposed that they on ordinary occasions ask for or expect miracles. They pray in the true sense of the Lord's Prayer—Give us this day our daily bread. They know God can grant their request by natural means as well as by miracles, but it is not for them to judge what are the proper means to be employed. As I have said, to God both are equally easy.

To avoid, however, the sin of tempting God, they are careful not to expect a miracle without a grave and sufficient cause. And when they do pray for and expect a miraculous intervention they know the necessary dispositions that should accompany their request. Like the devout people who, after trying in vain all natural remedies to obtain the cure of their maladies, make pilgrimages to holy places, and to the shrines of the saints, all are inspired indeed by an ardent longing to obtain relief from their sufferings, yet their trust is only conditional. That is, they only demand health if it be the will of God, and if it will conduce to the welfare of their souls. In the humble consciousness of human weakness and sinfulness they deem themselves unworthy of so great a grace, yet their faith and confidence in God always serve to promote His glory and to increase their own spiritual life even when they do not obtain the particular favor they desire. These are the dispositions with which extraordinary favors should be sought, but the reason or cause of asking should always be serious and sufficient.

We find such a reason and necessity for the miracle of our Saviour

in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. In that crowd of people there were some sick. They were all weary, for there was fear of many fainting by the way. All were hungry, for they had been with Him three days and had nothing to eat. There was no possibility of procuring food by any natural means, as we learn from the remark of one of the disciples: "From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness?" For these reasons our Saviour had compassion on the multitude. And also for one other very special reason, namely, the emptiness of their souls. They were as sheep without a shepherd, and in spiritual blindness and ignorance, and He would give them therefore an incontestable proof of His divine origin and mission by His wonderful miracle.

We should not, therefore, ask for or expect miracles for trifling things or for vain and useless reasons. God Almighty does not employ His power in vain. Frivolous events and changes, which merely produce fear or wonder, are unworthy the attention of a reasonable man, much less do they deserve that the Divine Wisdom should make use of a particular order of His providence to produce them. God Almighty can have no other ultimate end in all He does than His own glory and our real happiness. The confirmation or the advancement of piety and of Christian justice, and the sanctification of souls are the only supreme motives ultimately worthy of His goodness and infinite wisdom, and an exceptional exercise of His power should never, therefore, be expected or asked without grave and sufficient reason.

According to the ordinary course of providence, however, we should pray for all that we need. We should have recourse to Him not only for great but for small things, and at all times. Let us not forget or undervalue the ordinary things that we receive at His hands. Let not custom or familiarity induce forgetfulness of the greatness of these benefits which we daily and hourly receive. Let not distracting thoughts and worldly desires divert our minds from regarding the blessings of life in the proper light, nor from taking occasion from them of elevating our hearts to their Almighty Dispenser, and to render Him that worship which is so justly due to Him. We can not forget that miracles have a more striking effect upon us than ordinary things, but this is not because they are more excellent than those things of which we are daily spectators and beneficiaries, but, that being less frequent, they render us more sensible of the presence of their Author. We should, therefore, en-

deavor to pray for our daily wants with the like dispositions with which some devout souls pray for miracles, and in those prayers let the following considerations guide us in the manner of offering up our petitions:

1. That God would grant us the good things of this life in a lawful, regular manner, and in so far as they are necessary for our state and condition in life;

2. That He would bless and increase those things that are rightfully our own for the benefit of our children and those depending upon us for support—for the benefit of the poor and needy and for the good of religion;

3. That He would enable us to make a proper use of our worldly possessions.

It is quite possible for a man who has wealth to be holy and just as Job was in the days of his prosperity if he keeps his heart detached from these worldly ties—if he keeps it pure from sinful indulgence—if he makes a proper use of his riches and a just distribution of the superfluities. Yet we are to reflect on the many difficulties that accompany riches, the temptations to which they expose men in the way of covetousness and luxury, the innumerable examples of wickedness with which the Christian world is scandalized year by year by the inordinate seeking to secure accumulated wealth, by the defrauding of the poor, the impoverishing of honest, hardworking men and women, by the tyranny, the cruelty and hard-heartedness brought about by worldly prosperity, by too much wealth, either amassed and retained unjustly, or abused and wasted in pleasure-seeking and in sinfulness. There is reason, therefore, to remind people continually of our Lord's sayings that it is hard for a rich man to enter heaven, and again, "Wo to you that are rich: for you have your consolation" (Luke vi. 24). The rich man should, on account of these considerations, pray earnestly that God may enable him to be a just steward in the use and administration of those things that God has placed in his charge, that he may be able at the proper time to give a faithful account of his stewardship. There is no doubt that a rich man has it in his power to merit many good works if only they be performed, and performed with the necessary dispositions.

4. Finally, with regard to those who have prayed and have not received temporal things or those from whom God has taken away such things—these should say with holy Job: "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

If they are poor, let them be the poor of Christ by keeping themselves in union with Him. Let them not add to their poverty other worse evils, such as the neglect of duties toward God and the absence of virtuous lives. To imagine that poverty can be an obstacle in the way of virtue or the service of God is one of the greatest mistakes of modern times in connection with socialism, humanitarianism, and so many other systems of reform. If the poor neglect their religion, then they are to be blamed as well as the rich. On the other hand they have great advantages in one respect, namely, in being able to live after the example of their Divine Master in detachment from the world, in sufferings and privations, and with secure means of obtaining their eternal happiness if only they make use of them.

Let us then, dear brethren, renew our faith, and acknowledge our dependence on God, the Giver of all things, and let us be contented with that portion of earthly goods which God has allotted to us.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

SIN.

BY THE RT. REV. RAPHAEL MOSS, O.P.

“The wages of sin is death.”—Rom. vi. 23.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—The mystery of sin. We sin through ignorance—which is culpable. Must study sin in its effects on man and on God.

(a) *In man.* 1. Sin is disobedience. God's purpose in creation—His own glory. Man owes free obedience. Sin is disobedience—to the dishonor of God. This disobedience made less excusable on account of God's easy dealing with us. Comparison with Israelites adoring the golden calf. 2. Sin is ingratitude. God is the Giver of all gifts. Words of St. Polycarp. The ungrateful sinner is I myself. 3. Sin is hatred of God. Contempt of His law. Rejection of Himself.

(b) *Effects of sin on God.* God's loathing for sin manifested. 1. By punishment of fallen angels. 2. By punishment of sin in man. 3. By price paid for redemption.

Conclusion.—Regret for lost innocence. Repentance for sin.

When St. Paul tells us that the wages of sin is death, he sums up in a few brief words a most important truth, and one which seems patent to our reason, even unaided by the light of faith. “The wages of sin is death”—and indeed whether we consider the material

world as revealed to us by our senses, or that more wonderful spiritual world, visible to the understanding alone, we are brought face to face with the evidence of this truth; and change and dissolution of parts in the one, no less than failure and disappointment in the other, alike proclaim and testify to the existence of a discord which can only have been caused by sin or evil. And if we appeal to our faith, and make use of its unfailing light, this judgment of our reason is not only confirmed, but we are enabled to see clearly, where before we saw but dimly. We have explained to us the nature of that death, which is the miserable consequence of sin, for our faith shows us how sin is nothing less than the total absence of that Divine Life-Giver, in Whom all creatures "live and move and have their being." Nay, so bright is the light of faith, that the feeble reason shrinks back dazzled and blinded, and confesses its own inability to look further by admitting that sin is a mystery. And our faith approves of this confession. It reminds us of one who came to make atonement for sin, and then in the very darkest hour of His agony and sacrifice, prayed His Almighty Father to forgive sinners, for that they knew not what they did. These beautiful words of self-forgetting love are not merely the last outpouring of a heart whose every beat had been an act of supreme generosity—they are likewise the solemn proclamation of a great truth—that man knows not what he does when he sins. To sin, says St. Paul, is to trample under foot the Son of God, it is to crucify Him afresh, and could any Christian knowingly so outrage His Maker, when even the hard-hearted Jews, had they known, would never have crucified the Lord of Glory? If we sin, then, we sin because of ignorance. But we must not deceive ourselves and plead our ignorance in excuse. Real ignorance excuses from sin, but the ignorance which makes sin is an ignorance for which we are responsible, and so we may meditate for a few moments on the nature of sin, that by the consideration of its intrinsic foulness we may enkindle in our hearts a horror of an ignorance which leads us into such piteous depths of shame and degradation. We have said that sin was nothing less than the absence of Him whose presence is the life of every creature. It is, therefore, a separation, a cruel divorce between the poor creature and its great Creator, and in order to understand the exceeding horror of such a separation we have but to look at the work of sin in the heart of him who yields to it, and its consequences in the infinitely-loving mind of Him who is sinned against. Briefly and clearly, its work

is this. Instead of the mutual love which binds together naturally the Infinite Creator and the work of His hands, sin breeds a most unnatural mutual hate! Could anything more terrible be imagined? To hate one who is infinitely deserving of love! to be hated by one who is infinitely loving! Realize this, and you will have gone a long way toward understanding the mystery of sin. Ponder over it well, and you will begin to sympathize with the heartbroken cry of David, "Wash me yet more from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I know mine iniquity, and my sin is always before me" (Ps. 1. 4, 5). When we ask our faith to tell us why God broke in upon the loneliness of His eternity, and poured forth the bright loveliness of this mighty universe into the darkness of space, we are answered that it was all for His glory. God, the all-holy, all-powerful, self-sufficing God, could have no purpose, no motive outside Himself, and, therefore, everything that He created He created for Himself, and for the manifestation of His greater glory. And, therefore, it is, as Holy Writ says: "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands" (Ps. xviii. 2). But that divine glory was not perfectly shown forth, that song of praise could not be rightly sung, until man came forth from God's creative hand—man, with the understanding heart and power of free will—and bowed himself down in lowly obedience to his Maker. All creatures glorify their Creator by the fulfilment of the end for which He made them, but whereas their obedience is blind and unconscious, the obedience of man is the outcome of knowledge, it is the free and loyal service of the heart.

But, dearest brethren, precisely because man is raised so high, therefore can he fall so low, precisely because he can glorify his Maker so perfectly, therefore can he outrage Him so vilely, precisely because he can honor Him by his obedience, therefore can he dishonor Him by disobedience, and this dishonor, this outrage, this fall is what we call sin. Sin, then, is primarily an act of disobedience, a wilful refusal to conform to the law of God, whether in thought, word, or deed—a stubborn resistance to the voice of our own reason ever loudly proclaiming that obedience to the Creator is the first duty of the creature. It is to follow in the footsteps of the proud and stiff-necked King of Egypt, whose only answer to the divine message was an insolent refusal—"Who is the Lord that I should hear his voice? I know not the Lord" (Exod. v. 2). And this act of rebellion is all the more hateful because God asks nothing but

what is infinitely just and reasonable. He might ask a thousandfold more! He might ask all! He has a right to all, and He might exact all. He might take all by force, whereas He has willed to ask for but a little, and that as a free gift. Compare human laws and human lawgivers with that divine Almighty Providence of which they are the faint reflection! How different is their mode of action! Far from being free to conform to them or not, according to His will, man is forced to comply with their most minute requirements, or, in case of refusal, to submit to the penalty. Nor can he violate the law and hope to escape the penalty by sorrow and repentance, as most certainly he can in the case of the divine judgments. Repentance has no place in human justice, but the punishment must inevitably follow the crime, and the dreary prison, with its bleak walls and hard and thankless toil continued for days and months and years, or the still more terrible scaffold, with its brief but sharp agony of death—these are the avenging consequences of the violation of human laws, these, too, are the stern safeguards of their fulfilment. Then again our obedience to these laws must be its own reward, our submission can bring us no recompense beyond the avoidance of these penalties. Moreover, when we submit our wills to the gentle and easy laws of God, every such act of submission, no matter how small and insignificant and easy, merits for us a reward so much above us that our imagination can not even picture it. And whilst we have everything to gain by our obedience, that great and mighty God whom we obey, and Who will not force our service, but stoops to buy it of us, can gain absolutely nothing but the glory of our happiness. Yet with all this staring him in the face, with every faculty of his soul protesting against such senseless folly—man sins!

There was a time when God came down amongst His creatures in the midst of lightnings and thunders and clouds to manifest to them His law. And the multitudes around the mountain were smitten with great terror, and fell prostrate on the ground, sending up from their trembling lips the cry, “Let not God show Himself to us, let not God speak to us lest we die!” And yet whilst the hills around them were even yet echoing with the thunders, the mighty voice of God, “I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have other gods before me”—whilst the dark clouds still hung on the mountain top, the visible token of His dread presence, they made to themselves a golden calf and set it up and worshipped it, saying, “These be thy gods, O Israel!” And the same pitiful sight is repeated, and will

be repeated, day by day, as long as the sun shines upon the earth. "The Lord our God is the Lord, him only shalt thou adore, him only shalt thou serve." This is the voice that is ever sounding over the world, ringing through the darkest caverns of man's sinful heart, and obliging him to listen to its unchanging commands. But it can not or it will not oblige him to obey, and so man ever lifts his head against his Maker, and defies Him to His face. "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before me." "Who is the Lord that I should hear His voice? I know not the Lord." I will adore whom I choose, I will make gods of my own wayward inclinations, my own vile passions, my own sinful desires. I will place them on the throne of my heart and bow down before them and proclaim to the world the gods whom I have chosen—these be my gods, O Israel. And as I have made them my gods, so also will I serve them and them only, and all other commandments I will despise. But there is a lower depth still:

"What hast thou, says the apostle, what hast thou that thou hast not received, and if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory?" (I. Cor. iv. 7). But if we may not even glory in the powers of our being and the joys that they bring us simply because they are not our own, but the gifts of the Creator, what are we to say of the man who not only seizes them as his own, but even dares to employ them against Him who bestowed them? The servant who lifts his hand against his master forfeits his place; the subject who rebels against his king forfeits his life; but what if the master had found that servant dying of hunger by the roadside and by his loving care and attention had nursed him back to life and strength! What if the king had raised that subject from his lowly state and set him to rule in his place over kingdoms and empires? Rebellion! treason! These are not the words to express such a crime, and it is only because language fails that we call it ingratitude! Yet no earthly master, no monarch of this world, could give to those beneath them what God has given to us, for He has given us all, even our being! This body which we love so dearly, and honor so madly, it is His gift—the soul that quickens it, and makes us what we are, it came from His life-giving breath. Our home, our friends, our parents, our children, our pleasures, our enjoyments, they are all from Him, they are the tokens of His love, He holds them and us in the hollow of His hand. And then in the order of grace! Each individual soul knows its own history, and what has passed between that soul and God is a secret

until the great Day of Judgment. But each of us knowing his own special wants, his own special failings, and God's special patience and most loving kindness, each one can speak for himself and confess that nowhere on earth is there a soul so laden with God's gifts as his own. In the early ages of the Church, when the gates of hell were making every effort to prevail against it, they brought before the heathen judge an old and feeble man, Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and threatened him with the wild beasts and the stake if he would not blaspheme Christ. "Eighty-six years have I served him," replied the saint, "and He never did me wrong, but ever blessed me in many ways. How, then, can I blaspheme Him, my Lord and Saviour?" And gladly and joyously he chose the savage wild beasts and the burning fire. We wonder at his courage and we praise his devotion to duty, and we speak of such a sacrifice as a duty, because, in spite of ourselves, and no matter how we stop our ears, our reason is ever telling us that to Him, who has given us everything, everything, even life itself, is due in return. All this we must admit, or else deny the light of reason within us. And yet whilst he admits it in theory, the sinner by his acts denies it, when God is concerned. His hands and his feet, his eyes and his ears, his health and his strength, his understanding and his will, all the bright gifts that God has bestowed upon him, are turned into weapons against the generous Giver. And who is it that does this? Who so disgraces our nature? The sinner! But who is the sinner? Ah, my dearest brethren, it is not some one imagined by preachers, some one we have never met, but it is we ourselves—it is you, it is I! Louder than the accusing voice of the prophet Nathan, striking down the royal David in all the pride of his sin, with the bitter reproach, "Thou art the man," is the voice of conscience in our hearts, tearing away the veils of sham piety and worldly respectability and, perhaps, unconscious hypocrisy, in which we wrap ourselves, and piercing our hard, cold hearts with the same terrible accusation, "Thou art the man! Thou hast forsaken the Lord that begot thee, thou hast forgotten the Lord that created thee."

Now, dearest brethren, see for a moment how this disobedience and this ingratitude on the part of the sinner must beget in his heart a real hatred of his Creator and his God. If we despise a law, is it not because we despise the lawgiver? If we do not even think of it, is it not because we simply do not think it worth our while? A command which comes from one we love is obeyed with ready joy, no

matter what the cost ; if it come from one to whom we are indifferent, we coldly weigh its justice in our minds and act accordingly. But if we do not even give it a thought, it is surely because we despise and hate the one from whom it comes. Now, in which way do we listen to the commandments of God? With eagerness, with indifference, or with contempt? Sin is contempt of the law of God, and therefore to indulge in sin is to hate God. Then again, ingratitude implies hate, even as gratitude implies love. Polycarp could not blaspheme his benefactor, because he loved Him. Had he yielded to the temptation, it would have proved his love was dead. But when, instead of resisting temptation and resisting unto blood, a man revels in the filthy waters of sin, when its occasions are his joys, its obstacles his unhappiness, when instead of fighting against the tempter, he himself tempts his neighbor, and endeavors to increase the number of God's foes, is it not manifest that in his heart lurks a hatred of Him who hates nothing but sin! He does what evil he can, he would do more if he could, and because he finds there are limits to his powers of evil, he turns upon his Master, his Creator, and would destroy Him if he could.

But there is another side to this most dismal picture, for so far we have only considered the work of sin in the soul of man. We have now to contemplate its effect on our all-merciful Creator, and this sight at least must convince us of its utter foulness. When creation lay first before the face of God in all its unsullied beauty, He blessed it and loved it, for He saw that it was good. His Almighty love was poured out upon the things that He had made—it surged around them like a limitless ocean preserving in them the life and the existence that His power had bestowed. But like a cloud over the face of the deep, troubling all its beauty, sin came into the world, and God, who is love itself, found Himself compelled to hate. It could not be otherwise. He is goodness itself, sin is evil itself, and therefore He must necessarily hate it with an infinite, unchanging hate. Nay, more! When this most hateful stain appeared on the creatures He had made, and called out of nothing, the eternal love with which He had hitherto cherished them died away on the instant, and gave place to an unspeakable loathing. Millions and millions of angelic beings stood around Him, each one of them a world of unimaginable loveliness—their leader Lucifer, a very masterpiece of the Divine Mind, and lo! of a sudden, that leader and a third part of those glorious beings were cast into the bottomless pit. Sin ap-

peared amongst them, and swift, hopeless, and eternal ruin was its instant fruit.

In another part of creation dwelt other beings, but a little lower than the angels in beauty and in power ; they also stained themselves with sin, and the anger of God was kindled against them likewise. It would take long to tell of all that they lost, and, indeed, only they themselves could rightly tell the bitterness of their loss—but the terrible consequences of their sin reached forward to succeeding ages, and on millions of their children yet unborn the hand of God fell heavily. All nature rose up in rebellion against those who had rebelled against the Creator of all, and the beautiful home that God had given to man became a weary vale of tears. For six thousand years at least, God's curse had been upon our race in consequence of that sin ; for six thousand years man has been weeping bitterly, oh so bitterly under its heavy burden, and yet that curse is unrecalled, and will never be recalled until the end. For some unfortunates there will be no end, and God's undying hatred of sin will make their unrepenting souls the companions and the victims of the fallen angels in an everlasting hell.

All this we know, for God Himself has told us, yet lest we should mistake it or grow forgetful, He would give us another and a greater proof of His hatred of sin, and so He Himself came down amongst us and made Himself one of us, and then offered Himself up as a victim for sin. How He accomplished His task a glance at the cross will tell you. There you will see stretched out on that tree of shame the gracious form of Him who was beautiful above all the sons of men, because He was likewise their God. His body is all torn with cruel wounds—there is a deep rent in His sacred side. His head bowed down in death is encircled with a wreath of prickly thorns, and from His hands and feet pierced by long, iron nails—and indeed from every part of His mangled body the great red drops of blood trickle slowly, and every drop of blood and every gaping wound proclaims God's hatred of sin. O, then, my beloved brethren, if sin demanded a sacrifice of such infinite worth, it must be that sin is an infinite evil. If it could only be atoned for by the death of Him who was infinite to God, it must be that it is the mortal enemy of God. If the blood of Jesus Christ, if the shameful death of Jesus Christ, the coequal Son of the Eternal Father alone could blot out this terrible stain, it must be that God alone can know its full exceeding horror. And we, looking upon all this, realizing all this,

hear in our sin-stained hearts the whispering of a reproachful voice: "Know thou and see, that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God" (Jer. ii. 19).

It is an evil and a bitter thing! How evil, how bitter we can not truly realize, but we can do our best. Our own nature will help us in every way. "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil" (Rom. ii. 9). And as reasonably might we expect the sun to fail us as that this law of divine justice should be made void. True, there are some who seem to escape, some who go through life revelling in every sin and laughing at the thought of punishment, but none the less is it true that "the wages of sin is death", and in their souls death is already at work. The world may not notice it, but to God, and to the angels, and generally to himself as well, the sinner is a reflection of that fallen "seraph on whose cheek sate care," for, in spite of himself, his soul is ever longing and yearning for a lost glory which can be his no more. For though he may repent, and God in His loving mercy may forgive, yet has sin done its work, and though repentance may efface the stain, it can never never give back innocence. And oh! the sorrow of that thought for a soul that is sincere in its repentance! Holy Scripture tells us how God appeared to Solomon, and bade him ask whatsoever he would, and Solomon prayed for the gift of wisdom and understanding. Had that gracious vision been vouchsafed to him in later years, he would have surely made another prayer in the words of his father, David, "Wash me from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I know my wickedness, and my sin is ever before me." And that prayer we also would reecho, for weak as we are, sinful as we are, even we, sometimes at least, have some faint lingering memories of the days of our innocence, those bright, happy days, when we knew not what sin was, and their half-remembered fragrance fills our hearts with regret and makes them ache with sorrow. "Oh give me back my innocence, give me back the purity that once was mine, give me back those happy days when Thy light shone over my head and I walked before Thee in justice." These would be the words that would come to our lips, when at such moments we kneel down and speak to God in prayer—but the glory of that innocence is gone, and gone forever; and our prayer must be like David's, a cry of repentance, a pleading entreaty for that innocence which is born of forgiveness (Ps. xxxvii): "My iniquities are gone over my head, and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me."

"I am become miserable and bowed down even to the end. I walked sorrowful all the day long." "Lord! all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee." "For in thee, O Lord, have I hoped—thou wilt hear me, O Lord my God!" "For I will declare my iniquity, and I will think of my sin."

That is our only hope. We have sinned and done evil, and the burden will indeed lie heavy upon us, unless we replace the lost innocence of sinlessness by the innocence of repentance, and so escape the consequences of our folly. And then even the approach of that death, which is the wages of man's first sin, will fail to make us fearful, since, as Holy Writ assures us, to keep innocence and to take heed to what is right, is the only sure way to bring a man peace at the last.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE CHURCH THE TEACHER OF THE NATIONS.

BY DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B., B.A. (OXON.)

"Give her the living child . . . for she is the mother thereof."—III. Kings iii. 27.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—(a) A Protestant recognizes the voice of the true Church at the Good Friday office. She is the mother of all living, but has a very special care for the young. In this way she reflects the life of her divine Lord.

(b) Her lesson is the fear of the Lord, the knowledge and love of God. She warns her children against erroneous teaching, and values the faith of a little child more than all the learning of the proud.

(c) Accused of being the foe of science, the voice of history is decisive in her favor. She has ever taught all arts and sciences hand in hand with religion. Witness the ancient monasteries, the only homes of learning in a barbarous age.

(d) Examples: Cyril and Methodius, Augustine, Bede, Alcuin, etc. Yet knowledge to her always secondary to the divine revelation of which she is the guardian. All discoveries welcomed by her, for truth can not contradict truth. She has seen the rejection of countless theories once confidently brought forward as fatal to the truths she teaches.

(e) Her special predilection for the instruction of children. The monastic schools of old—the Jesuits, St. Joseph Calasanzius, St. John Baptist de la Salle, and other founders. The divine blessing on their work.

(f) St. Anne a type of the Church as teacher.

(a) A Protestant was once present in a Catholic Church during the Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday. He was impressed, as who could help being, by the solemnity of the rite, by the desolate

appearance of the altars stripped of every ornament, the veiled crosses and the vestments of mourning, his heart was thrilled by the solemn chanting of the Sacred Passion which in so dramatic a manner sets forth the sufferings of the Divine Victim, but when before the adoration of the cross the priest and his ministers stood at the bare altar and chanted in solemn tones the appointed prayers for all sorts and conditions of men, for the pastors of the Church, for the king and the faithful, for the sick, for prisoners, for mourners, for those in trial or tribulation, for catechumens, for the heathen, unbelievers, and heretics, nay, even for the perfidious Jews who had that day slain their God, a thought that had long possessed him now took shape and force in his mind, the idea ripened into conviction, and he exclaimed with tears: "I have found her at last. This indeed is the true Church of God, the mother of all living! She is the mother thereof!"

The Church can leave no class outside the range of her maternal love and care, all are committed to her, and for all she prays, for all she labors, for all she travails till Christ be born in them; for does not the very charter of her institution bear the divine command of her founder, Go into all the world and teach all nations?

But it is especially for the poor, for the weak and the young, the little ones who believe in Christ, that she, like her divine Spouse, has the greatest and the most tender care.

And in this she reflects as in all else the example of her Lord. Was it not He who, when His disciples strove after rank and precedence, placed in their midst a little child and proposed him as the model for their conduct? Did He not ever welcome the children around Him, and if ever He yielded to a holy impatience, was it not when men in mistaken zeal would drive away the little ones lest they should worry Him? Did He not take them up in His arms, and place them on His knee, and listen smiling to their innocent prattle and bless them with the tenderness of a mother? Was it not the thought of the sufferings of little children that made Him stay on the dolorous road to Calvary, and even while sinking under the weight of the cross, warn the women of Jerusalem of the fate that was hanging over them and their children? Did He not denounce in fearful terms of woe the sinner who should dare place scandals in their way? And so the Church as His true representative on earth has ever the tenderest place in her heart for the little ones, and ever among the most important duties of her charge has she placed that spiritual work of mercy, the instruction of children.

Go ye unto all the world and teach.

(b) But what is she to teach them?

Ah, my brethren, she has lessons such as none other hath. Her lessons are such as bring life and salvation. "Come, my children, and hearken unto me," she cries, "and I will teach you"—what? "the fear of the Lord!" Mock not, O man of science, puffed up in thine own conceits, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and much understanding have they who do thereafter. The Church knows that all learning, all science is vain, *vanitas vanitatum*, unless it is based on that most solid foundation. *Scientia inflat*, knowledge puffeth up, except in hearts already deeply grounded in that first of all sciences, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of one's own nothingness.

Therefore, the Church as the organ and mouthpiece of the Most High, ever teaches her children that the one essential necessary knowledge for man is that he would know how to attain the end for which he was created. And so she gathers her little ones round her knee, and teaches them to know, love, and serve God in this life, that they may be happy with Him forever in the next. She takes a little child, and the very first word she teaches him to utter is the adorable name of God. "Who made you?" she asks, and she teaches him to answer, "God made me."

Perish all the wisdom of this world, she seems to say, if it is not directed to this essential end to know God better and to serve Him more faithfully. To the false wisdom of the world she sets up in opposition the divine folly of the cross. She will have no compromise with error, no hesitation as to truth. She has a message to deliver to man which has been dictated to her by the Divine Wisdom, the Incarnate Wisdom of God, and that message she knows to be above all human reason, and infinitely more precious than all the accumulated science of the centuries.

And, therefore, where she sees that a branch of study has led its professors into new and dangerous paths, like a wise and careful mother she points out those dangers, she even forbids her children to read the books of such writers, lest the simplicity of their faith should suffer, and the divine truths be obscured by the specious glitter of ungodly science.

She never forgets that as her Divine Founder once so solemnly thanked God, these essential truths are hidden from the wise and

prudent and revealed unto babes and sucklings. And to her maternal heart the simple faith of a little child is infinitely more precious than all the learning of the proud and self-satisfied man of science.

(c) And so the Church has been accused, and is still accused sometimes, of being the enemy of learning and science, the foe of progress, and the supporter of ignorance and superstition.

She can afford to smile at the ignorance of her accusers, she has no need to defend herself, for the very stones cry out against them. The witness of history is clear and decisive, that if there have been preserved to the world the treasures of classical literature, the arts, sciences of bygone ages, the stored-up wisdom of the sages of old, it is due to the ceaseless efforts of the Church and her most devoted servants. Strong in a faith which can never falter, and in a truth which neither modern discoveries nor ancient philosophy can ever, I will not say destroy, but even shake for a moment, she hands down to the world through all the ages the accumulated science of past generations. Take those Middle Ages, which are known by the contemptuous name of the Dark Ages, in which it is represented that the world was sunk in barbarism, owing to the power of the Church. What do we find when we examine them more closely? We find an age in which the light of faith burned brilliantly, in the midst of the turbulence of a society not yet completely civilized. We find striking contrasts, great crimes side by side with extraordinary sanctity, ignorance indeed, but at the same time learning such as it would be difficult to parallel nowadays. We find the Christian nations emerging from barbarism. And whose hand is it that is ever stretched out to draw them from the abyss of ignorance but that of the Catholic Church? In her houses alone do we find men whose lives are wholly dedicated to God, and whose work nevertheless it is to teach and instruct in secular as well as in religious knowledge. Consider those glorious monasteries of old, which scattered over the length and breadth of Europe, and nowhere more plentifully than in England, were the nurseries of science, literature, and the homes at once of art and of religion. In days when the printing press was unknown we owe the preservation of the masterpieces of classical writers, both Greek and Latin, to say nothing of the works of the Christian Fathers, nay, of the Holy Scriptures themselves, to the patient labors of those monastic scribes, who, winter and summer, day by day, unweariedly toiled away in the

Scriptorium copying the precious manuscripts, and lovingly adorning them with ornaments in gold and color. There were books which cost the daily labor of a skilled copyist for some six or seven years. In those monasteries, too, were schools where the children of the poor as well as the young nobles of the neighborhood were instructed in all the liberal arts, and for the poor such instruction was ever given without money and without price. If we wish to know to what a pitch the cultivation of the arts had attained, we have but to visit one of these old abbeys or cathedrals to see beauties which all the art of this much vaunted age tries vainly even to copy. As Faber says to holy St. Benedict:

Kings with thy wisdom in their hearts, dear saint,
Have grown more royal 'neath thy Christlike rule;
And when the world with ignorance was faint,
Learning found shelter in thy tranquil school.

(d) And so when the Catholic missionary went forth from the sheltered cloister to preach the Gospel to the pagans, side by side with the humble Church he raised ever a school. If in the one hand he brought the good message of Gospel truth, in the other he held the blessings of civilization and instruction. Thus SS. Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of the Slavonic races, first reduced the language of their converts to writing, and composed its alphabet, an essential condition for any progress in civilization. Thus the Benedictine apostles of England brought to our Saxon fathers not merely the faith of Jesus Christ, precious and inestimable treasure though that be, and sufficient in itself to deserve our undying gratitude, but also the arts and sciences of Rome, so that in a short period there were English scholars at Canterbury who rivalled in learning the most famous savants of the Eternal City, and in less than a century the country produced that miracle of learning, the Venerable Bede, a man who knew Greek and Latin as familiarly as his mother tongue, and who was an acknowledged master of every science, sacred or profane.

In that humble monk, who rarely stirred outside his abbey walls, the accumulated knowledge of all past centuries was stored as in a mighty reservoir, from which it flowed forth over all the land in vivifying streams. And so when the Emperor Charlemagne wished to set up a school of men learned in all the arts and sciences known to the world, it was to an English monastery he turned to find a

director, in the person of the great Alcuin. Nor need I remind you of the learning of the Irish monks who made the Green Isle at one period not merely an Isle of Saints, but a centre of science and a home of art.

The Church has ever taught and ever must teach, for she is our mother, nor is her mind so narrow or her vision so restricted that she would confine herself to teaching spiritual truths. Only these must ever be for her the *unum necessarium*. Other knowledge must ever be secondary, and must be brought into subordination to the supremacy of faith. For to her all wisdom and all knowledge comes from God and tends to God. If she encourages her children to study the starry heavens and to devote their days and nights to the science of astronomy, it is that the contemplation of these marvels may give them yet a deeper sense of the majesty and power of their Creator. If she delights in the chronicles and annals of history, it is because on every page she sees the signs of the all-guiding, all-directing hand of divine Providence. If the liberal arts, painting, and music, and sculpture flourish under her wing, it is that they may be turned to the glory of the All-Beautiful, whom she loves and whom she worships.

Therefore does she put no bounds to the inquiries of the man of science, to the labors of the philosopher or the historian, save, indeed, to remind them that they should be undertaken in a spirit of reverence and submission to the one infallible truth which it is her privilege to possess, to guard, and to teach.

She fears no new discovery of science, she shrinks from no investigation into the past. She knows that truth can never be at variance with truth, and if, therefore, some new fact be brought to light, it can never be at variance with the old truth handed down by her. Fancied oppositions of science and revelation have been discovered in every age, but she is old enough to remember that they have ever proved imaginary. Therefore she is cautious, therefore she is patient: cautious not to accept the hypotheses of science before they are proved to be facts: patient in showing that those that are proved are not incompatible (if rightly understood) with the revelation of which she is the appointed guardian on earth. She can afford to smile at the ravings of her enemies, at their proclamations of her speedy, nay, immediate, downfall. She has survived so many such, and she, not they, has the infallible promises of God.

(e) But, as we have said, the special field of labor in which is

shown the loving zeal of the Church is her care for the education of the young, and especially of the children of the poor. The monks had large and flourishing schools in their monasteries at all periods. When the last Abbot of Glastonbury ascended the hill above his mighty monastery there to die for the holy faith, he left behind him a school of three hundred boys. And the work of the Benedictines was supplemented and continued by the later orders, which sprang up like flowers in the garden of the Church. The Franciscans and Dominicans were chiefly devoted to preaching, yet they, too, had their schools. Their professors taught in the Universities of Oxford and Paris, and their lessons were thronged by eager crowds. And when at a time of great distress God raised up for the defense of His Church the glorious company of Jesus, the education of the young was one of the principal aims which the founder of that company set before him. The Jesuit schools by their extraordinary excellence extorted the admiration even of their most bigoted enemies, such as Lord Bacon, and great scholars, like the blessed martyr Edmund Campion at Prague, did not think it beneath them to teach the rudiments to boys. Nor can we pass over the gentle St. Joseph Calasanctius, who founded an order expressly intended to teach the poor gratuitously. The old saint, when he was over eighty, used to find his delight in sweeping out the classrooms and accompanying his young scholars back to their homes, lest they should be tempted to linger in the streets. More than once when he was giving class he was consoled and encouraged by a vision of the Blessed Mother of God who appeared with the Infant Jesus in her arms, blessing him and his young scholars. But three years since, the world has seen the canonization of another great saint who devoted his life to the cause of Christian education, St. John Baptist de la Salle, founder of the Christian Brothers. What an immense work for God has been done and is being done by this devoted order it is not necessary for me to remind you. Time fails me to tell of St. Angela Merici, foundress of the Ursuline Order for the education of Christian maidens, of Madame Barat, the foundress of the great educational Order of the Sacred Heart, of Mère Julie Billiart, foundress of the Sisters of Notre Dame, of Catharine McAulay, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. Blessed are they and blessed are their works, for their whole lives were devoted to that great spiritual work of mercy, the instruction of the ignorant. Blessed are their works which still continue, and which shall endure indeed forever, "for they that

bring many to justice shall shine as the stars for ever and ever in the kingdom of our God."

(f) My brethren, we are celebrating to-day the feast of St. Anne, the mother of our Blessed Lady. The Church loves to represent that holy mother engaged in teaching her child. How beautiful to think of those lessons, in which the mind of the Immaculate Virgin grew and expanded under the holy teaching of her mother. What a spectacle for the holy angels was that when Mary learned to read the prophecies that unfolded her glorious destiny and predicted the sufferings and the triumph of the God-man! St. Anne may then be taken as a striking figure of our Holy Mother Church as teacher of the young. What the Lily of Nazareth learned at her mother's knee Holy Church has been teaching in all ages and to all peoples. Her enemies would fain close her voice, they proscribe and persecute her representatives, they would substitute for her divine teaching the so-called undenominational education of the state. In France we see the Church's schools closed, the religious expelled, and the little children left a prey to the ravages of the godless and the scoffer. But God's Church will never be silenced, let her foes do what they will. They will pass away, but she will endure, and after the wave of persecution has swept over the land, she will be found there as of old, tranquilly pursuing her holy task; crying out as of yore to the little ones over whose souls she yearns, "Come, my children, and hearken unto Me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

"*Quare fremuerunt gentes?*" Of what avail is the fury of the wicked? The Lord sitteth above the waterfloods, and in His own time there will be peace. Then will the voice of a Catholic people be heard once more, and as the voice of one man it will confirm the decree made of old by the King of Wisdom: "Give her," and to her alone, "the living child, for she is the mother thereof."

May Holy Mother Anne plead with Jesus and with Mary for the little children's souls!

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE TIME OF VISITATION.

BY THE VERY REV. F. C. DOYLE, O.S.B.

“Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.”—Luke xix. 44.

SYNOPSIS.—The Gospel represents Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, the cause of His tears being that “it had not known the time of its visitation.” Not only nations, but individuals, have their day of visitation. It is most important that this day should be recognized. Therefore, let us consider the ways in which God visits us, that knowing them and the way in which we treat them, we may be moved to reform our conduct, and by reforming it, to recognize the time of our visitation.

I. A glance at the way in which God visited the Jewish nation will present to you a picture of the way in which He visits you.

A. The Prophets were sent to them to convey His Message. The Messiah being born, the Wise Men came to Jerusalem to worship Him. Christ, as a boy of twelve years, appeared in the Temple. The Baptist announced Christ’s mission. Christ as the Saviour traversed Judea and taught in Jerusalem. Thus did God visit His people.

B. How God visits us. We have in our possession the writings, and the teachings of the Prophets. Christ, who spoke through them, still speaks through the Church. That Church expounds to us His will and law. He speaks to us by internal inspirations; by the teaching of Holy Books; by the fervent words of preachers; by the death of friends, and by many other ways which each will know best.

II. How these visitations are usually received. Look at the way in which the Jews acted toward them; it will furnish you with a mirror in which you will see your own action in their regard.

A. The Jews slew the Prophets and stoned those sent to teach and to rebuke them.

B. They pointed out to the Magi the place of Christ’s birth; but they went not with them to seek and to adore Him.

C. They allowed the memory of the child Jesus, whose wisdom had filled them with wonder, to fade from their minds.

D. When that child had reached man’s estate, they rejected His doctrine; they despised His miracles; they hanged Him on the cross. In this conduct, behold a striking image of your own when Christ visits you. When He speaks through the Scriptures, you heed them not. When He speaks through the Church which teaches you what to believe and what to do, you question its authority; you set aside its laws. You stifle the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. You heed not the warnings of books that speak of death and judgment and hell. If your conduct with regard to God’s visitation resembles the conduct of the Jews, your chastisement will also resemble that inflicted upon them “for not having known the time of their visitation.”

III. This last inference, if duly reflected on, will help you to reform, by causing you feelingly to realize that “the time of visitation” is short. Christ calls it a day, the brief day of life. That day is briefer for some than it is for others. When the day is over, no more work can be done. The work to be done is the subjugation of passions; the rooting out of evil habits; the acquisition of virtues—meekness, humility, purity; the practise of good works; in one word, it is the perfecting of our

spiritual being, as far, at least, as that is possible in this life. How much of this work has thus far been accomplished? Has it been begun? If it has not, or if only very little has been done, it is high time to set about the work. For some, the day is already far spent; the sun of life is setting; the shades of night are deepening; it will soon be quite dark. When that night enfolds us in its mantle, we can do nothing.

Conclusion.—Therefore, be up and doing. If the past has been spent in the indulgence of passion, now is the time to put an end to that indulgence. An end will be put to it; if, looking into the book of conscience, you sum up your debts to God, weep over them, carry them to the tribunal of penance and there have them canceled. Then begin to reform your misspent life. Watch your thoughts and keep them clean; check your desires and prevent them from going out to evil; put a bridle on your tongue lest it be unto you a whole world of iniquity; keep your other members from doing the devil's work. Let the great Master, when the night falls and the workmen must quit the vineyard, find you with your work finished. By acting thus, you will have known, and by knowing you will have profited by God's day of visitation.

How strange is the spectacle put before us by the Gospel to the reading of which you have just listened—an enthusiastic crowd blessing and praising Christ, Who, seated on an ass's colt, is led in triumph to the holy city, the tears streaming from His eyes, His voice broken with emotion! What is it that thus so deeply moves Him? Not the outburst of popular enthusiasm on His behalf; not His knowledge that many of those who now blessed would curse and revile Him; not that a traitor among the chosen twelve walked by His side; nor that their Chief would basely deny Him. It was because Jerusalem, that is to say the Jewish people as a nation, "had not known the time of its visitation," had shut its eyes, and closed its ears, and hardened its heart against Him and His doctrine, thereby rejecting that which was intended to save it.

Now, there is for individuals, as for nations, which are but societies of individual units, a time of visitation; that time is the brief day of life, and that visitation consists of the various ways in which Christ offers us His divine grace to enable us to win our eternal crown.

Let me, then, to-day point out to you some of these ways, that you may be moved to take advantage of them, and by so doing "to know the time of your visitation."

(I) Let us first briefly pass in review some of the ways in which God visited His people, for these are but so many types of the ways in which He visits individuals, that is to say, each of us. From the earliest ages, all through the four thousand years preceding the coming of Christ, God at various times sent to His chosen people prophets, holy men inspired by Him, to keep alive and to explain the

primitive revelation made to men, and to convey to them His message, His call to repentance, and His promise of a Saviour, a Deliverer. These prophets spoke of the future Christ; they pointed out the date and the place of His birth; they sketched the character of His life; they described the manner of His death. Thus, they kept alive the hope of the Deliverer promised by God at the time of the fall, of that mighty One who should crush the serpent's head.

In the fulness of time the Deliverer came noiselessly, as light or as the falling snow, and at His coming there appeared in Jerusalem wise men from the East, who by tradition had heard of the Messias that was to come, of Him whose birth was to be heralded by a wondrous star of which Balaam had spoken ages before. They had seen that star; they had followed its guiding light; and they now asked where the great King had been born. Their coming and their inquiry moved all Jerusalem. The records were searched; the prophetic writings were consulted; and the response which these inspired documents returned sent the royal pilgrims to the little village of Bethlehem.

Twelve years after this event, a little boy came into one of the Temple courts at Jerusalem, and seating Himself among the other children, who were being instructed in the law, amazed the doctors of Israel by the profundity of His questions and by the lucidity of His answers.

Eighteen years afterward that boy, now arrived at the prime of life, began to preach and to teach. But at the very commencement of His mission, a great ascetic and prophet had appeared in the Jordan Valley preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins. He was, we might say, the last of the prophets, carrying in his bosom all their wisdom, all their inspiration. He was the forerunner of the desired of all nations sent to announce the Christ's actual presence among the people of God. He spoke of the Christ as one the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to loose. He pointed Him out as the Redeemer, the Lamb of God, the Mighty One Who should blot out the sins of the world. To this prophet, baptizing in the waters of the Jordan, there came the Lamb of God. Among the crowd of sinners, He, the sinless One, stood humbly waiting to receive upon His brow the cleansing waters of which He stood not in need. The prophet expostulated with Him, but at a word from his Master with true humility obeyed His will; then, as the Redeemer went up out of the water, the Baptist saw the Holy

Spirit descending upon Him and heard the voice of the Eternal proclaiming from the vault of heaven: "This is my beloved Son." What a series of visitations were these!

Yet, great as they were, they were but the prelude of others, greater and still more magnificent. For Jesus the Saviour, the Messiah, the Incarnate God, began to move about among the children of His nation. He spoke familiarly with them; He healed their diseases; He lightened their sorrows; He opened the eyes of the blind; He cleansed the lepers; He raised the dead; He taught with authority a doctrine that should throw open to them the kingdom of heaven. Thus, in very truth, did God visit His people.

Now, all these various acts are but images of that which happens to the individual man. First, look at those individuals as a great mass which we may designate the flock of Christ. Are there not prophets sent to them also? The Seers of old time are theirs also, for they have their prophecies gathered into the Great Book or Bible. But besides these, other prophets are vouchsafed to them. The Christ, when He came, came as a teacher whose lessons were to be taught till time shall be no longer. Therefore, He instituted a school of teachers to dispense His doctrine through all the ages that are yet to come. To that school He gave authority to teach, and the Holy Ghost to preserve it from error. He promised to abide with it till the end and to preserve it from the enmity and the attacks both of devils and of men instigated and pushed on by the devils to assail, and, if possible, to overturn it. Hence, by the teaching of that body which we call the Church, or rather the teaching portion of the Church, men are able to know both what to believe and what to do. Therefore, God still visits His people and enables it to have a right faith and a sound morality springing from that faith. He visits not only the great body, but the individual members of which it is composed—if they accept and give ear to His accredited ministers; for He has declared by the mouth of His coequal Son that whosoever hears and obeys them, hears and obeys Him. These members of His Church may, perchance, have strayed from the right way, forgotten God and lost sight of their destiny, when, from the instruction and the teaching of one of these His ministers, there is flashed into their souls a ray of divine light. The sleeping conscience is awakened; the evil of sin is made manifest; remorse for past infidelities is aroused; sorrow for the evil that has been done wells up; and the soul, under the touch of the finger of God, makes an effort to be rid

of evil, and, aided by His grace, does in reality shake itself free from the galling bondage. For God in His wisdom has left in His Church all that is necessary to help the fallen creature that has once been made a member of that Church by the rite of baptism, to burst asunder the chains that hold him captive. That creature, now made painfully conscious of the enormity of sin, throws himself at the feet of Christ's minister, confesses the evil of which he has been guilty, and promises amendment. He is then mercifully absolved and restored to the state of justice whence he has fallen. Moreover, the new spiritual life thus infused into his veins is nourished and maintained in full vigor by a spiritual food, a heavenly bread, which is none other than the sacramental flesh and blood of the God-Man. He is sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and when he comes to die, he is cleansed from every stain, that he may present himself before the tribunal of the great Judge, free from every spot and stain.

These are only some of the ways in which God visits the individual soul. He speaks to the conscience and the heart by secret inspirations. He speaks through the written word. He speaks through the ills and the adversities of life. He speaks through the death and the misfortunes of others.

(2) Thus does God provide for the salvation of nations and of individuals, in various ways speaking to them, calling them to repentance, and ministering to them the means for securing their eternal well-being. How do they respond to these efforts of His to save them? As a rule, the Jewish nation slew the prophets and stoned those that were sent to them with God's message of mercy. The doctors of the law and the priests, after pointing out to the Magi the place where, according to prophecy, the Messiah should be born, troubled not themselves to follow in their train and pay to Him that obedience and homage which are His due. They allowed to fade from their minds the memory of the marvelous questions which, at the age of twelve years, He had put to the doctors in the Temple, and of the still more marvelous replies which He had given to their interrogations. They heeded not the testimony made in His favor by the Baptist. They opposed His teaching. They attributed His miracles to the agency of the devil. They crowned their guilt by at last hanging Him on the accursed tree. Thus, they neither knew nor took advantage of the day of their visitation.

How is it with you? You have all the graces and favors that they had with many more besides. The Church and her ministers are

continually preaching to you Christ and Christ's morality. Their lessons are ever sounding in your ears. At times, when listening to them as Felix did to the apostle discoursing of virtue, of judgment, and of the wrath to come, you tremble, and make purposes of amendment. But you suffer the visitation thus vouchsafed to you by God to remain without effect. You transgress the law of God and set aside the laws of His Church. Thus also does it fare with most of the other means employed by God for your salvation. You are, for instance, reading a book from the pages of which some sentence speaks to you and sends through your inmost being a thrill, it may be, of fear, or of gratitude, or of goodly purpose, but you do not act upon it. A chance word spoken by a friend, or a passage in a sermon, performs for you a similar office, but you shut your ears to the call, for it would interrupt your pleasures. Misfortunes visit you; they are angels in disguise sent to work your good and help you to win eternal life; but you do not accept them as such; you revolt against them and against Him who permits them to enter your home. Death strikes down at your side some cherished friend and bids you take warning by his fate, thus pointing out and emphasizing the brevity of the time allotted to God's visitations; again, though alarmed, you do not amend. Can this kind of conduct be suffered to go on forever? There must be an end to it. God grant that you may not be punished as the Jews were for failing to know the time of visitation, and may that visitation never be hidden from your eyes.

In what way or by what means shall you be able to avert so great a calamity? First, by ever keeping before your minds the fact that the time of visitation is very brief. Our Lord calls it a day. Much of that day has, for many of you, already passed away forever. The evening of it may be close upon you. Nay, the shadows of the night may now have actually closed in upon you. When they shall have enveloped you, it will be that night of palpable darkness during which no work meritorious of salvation can be done. The memory, then, of the shortness of the time yet remaining is the first means to be employed by you for taking advantage of your day of visitation. It is very brief, and there is much to be done while yet the light remains. Behind you is the past full of sins and of the evil habits resulting from the indulgence of passion. These sins have to be blotted out. The work of so doing is an arduous one, calling for all the energy and the will power at your command. The evil habits

wrapping you round and hampering you as with an entangling network not easily to be broken must be torn off your limbs. What determination, what patience, what undaunted courage are requisite to accomplish this difficult task! Yet it must be done and done quickly, for the day is fast waning and the night is now close at hand.

Secondly, when thoroughly and feelingly convinced of this, the next step to be taken is to keep wide open the eyes of your soul and to recognize the various means by which God causes His voice and His grace to reach your soul. By doing this, you will accept these as angels sent by God; you will give them free ingress into your heart; you will ask them what you must do, and having heard their answer, you will do it. Thus, you will undo the past; you will plant virtues; "you will know the things that are for your peace;" you will avert from yourself the calamity of being deaf to the call of God, and blind to the ways by which He deigns to impart to you His graces; you will know the time of your visitation.

My brethren, is not this a consummation devoutly to be wished? Is it not that for which each of you should most earnestly pray? Therefore, being now fully convinced that God very frequently visits you by His teaching, by His inspirations, by the instrumentality of His ministers, by good books, by the calamities falling upon yourselves and upon others, be determined to take advantage of them. Do not, as you have, perhaps, hitherto, done, close the door of your heart against them. Remember that the work of your salvation is a great, an arduous work requiring all your energy aided by the grace of God. Without His aid, all your efforts will be fruitless; but that aid, brought to your very door by His unceasing visitations, will most assuredly enable you to accomplish this difficult task. Gladly accept it and make use of it. To reject it, is to harden the heart, to enfeeble the will, and to blind the eyes of the mind against the dazzling light of the day of visitation.

Therefore, on this day when the Gospel represents Christ weeping over a doomed nation that did not know the day of its visitation, take warning lest the terrible judgment that fell upon it, should overtake and fall upon you also. Humbly beseech our Lord always to make you know when He knocks at the door of your heart; to give you grace speedily to open it; to help you to accept and to turn to the best account the grace that He sends. Thus, you will know the day of your visitation. Knowing it, you will employ its fleeting hours so well that the merits accruing to you from your labor will entitle you to a share in that blissful life that will never end.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

PRIDE.

BY THE REV. W. GRAHAM.

“O God, I give thee thanks that I am not like the rest of men.”—Luke xviii. 11.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—A. Life, teaching and example of Christ a standing protest against pride in all its forms. A subtle and spiritual sin, utterly repugnant to Spirit of Christianity. Is spirit of heathenism and infidelity.

B. What is pride? Fountain sin. Not often grievous sin in itself. When it is so. Main evil that it acts as solvent or corrosive of virtue. State of mind it engenders, opposed to God and His Christ.

I. An act of theft. How? Robs God of His glory. Taking to self what not our own against will of God. He wills we should refer all primacy to Him whence every good and perfect gift comes.

II. A lie. How? It marks an untruth. God, lover of justice and truth; therefore hates pride. Humility not cloister virtue. The root and basis of all virtues.

Conclusion.—Exhortation to profit by hearing lessons taught in gospel of day. Our own utter nothingness. Absolute dependence on God.

Pride must be a great evil since the Scriptures so persistently denounce and warn against it. Indeed, the whole life and teaching of Christ form a standing protest against it in every shape and form. The worst feature in this vice is that it is a subtle, spiritual sin often found, as in the case of Lucifer, conjoined with great gifts and high endowments, yet leading, if not checked, to direct opposition to God, withdrawal of our dependence on Him and the lawfully constituted authorities, spiritual and temporal, that represent Him. It is, therefore, deservedly called the first of the seven deadly or capital sins that form part of the sad inheritance of the fall; and the great fight that we have all to wage against vice and sin is really the struggle to keep pride and its companion sins under. These sins are like smoldering volcanoes that may at any time burst into flame. Though commonly latent and rooted in every human heart, yet pride seldom in itself and apart from its consequences reaches the extent of a specific, grievous, mortal sin. It is only grievous sin when perfect, as, e. g., when a person is so obstinately wrapped up in self, so intensely self-concentrated as to be prepared to break any law rather than submit to another having the right to require obedience in

grave matters, that it expands into a mortal sin of pride. This is said to have been the sin of Lucifer, who was so dazzled with his own powers and excellencies as to refuse submission to his Lord and Creator. So, too, all the great heresiarchs, Arius, Luther, Calvin, and the rest, who clung obstinately to their own errors and opinions rather than yield to the authoritative teaching of God's infallible Church, were guilty of the sin of intellectual pride. Likewise, in every day life, when pride leads to such contempt for others as to make us loathe and detest them and consequently, perhaps, slander or otherwise do them great wrong, it assumes the form of a grave sin. It is more, however, as a corrupting and corrosive element of good works and qualities, as a habit and state of mind implying an unchristian and unchristlike disposition, that it is dangerous and effects so much evil. Pride acts in the heart as the silent forces of frost and damp and rust in nature. The hardest rocks and buildings gradually give way before them. Pride is a solvent of all characteristic Christian virtues. When a man becomes, as it were, his own centre, his own idol, his own end, when honor and wealth and praise are his sole ambition in life, you may be sure that he is swayed not by the spirit of the Gospel, but by that "pride of life" equally condemned by St. John with the grosser sin of lust or impurity. It is the root and origin; the source and fountain-head of innumerable other sins—all radically opposed to the life and spirit and teaching of our Saviour. Atheism, infidelity, ambition, vain-glory, hypocrisy, presumption, and boasting all more or less originate and have their basis in pride.

I. Humility is the keystone of Christ's teaching; it is the very foundation of Christian ethics and doctrines. A "God emptying himself and taking the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7); lying in a manger as a shivering babe; growing up the reputed son of a common workman; and dying as a criminal on an infamous gibbet. His whole system of religion "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles, foolishness" (I. Cor. i. 23). All this serves as a rebuke to our pride, reminding us that "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace" (I. Peter v. 5), and that "unless we become as little children we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3). And very justly, too, because God loves justice and truth; whereas pride, rightly understood, is an act of theft and of falsehood combined. To steal is to take, retain, and employ for our own use and benefit what belongs to another against

his will. This is what the truly proud man does. He takes to himself and attributes to himself the merit and praise and gifts and blessings that come from and belong to Almighty God. All that we have or can have belongs first and foremost to Him, and, therefore, to boast of them or glory in them without reference to or dependence on the Giver of "every good and perfect gift" (James i. 17) is to appropriate what does not belong to us and an attempt to rob God of His glory. True, God bestows His favors upon us freely, gratuitously; but as a God of order, of fairness, with the implied condition that we should be grateful and dependent, i. e., humble.

II. Pride is, moreover, a lie, a falsehood. It is boasting that we are and have what certainly we are not and have not. We absolutely are and have nothing outside the empty void from which we sprang. All else is the gift of God—often granted in and through the mere accident of birth, fortune, and position. "For if thou hast received," says St. Paul, "why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?" (I. Cor. iv. 7). God loves humility, then, because He loves, as we ought to love, common truth and honesty. It was the absence of pride that formed the grandest of the most highly favored and gifted of human beings, our Blessed Lady: "*Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae.*" Humble souls are truly great because they know their place under God and keep it. It is not that they are ignorant or unconscious of their gifts and endowments; but that they know their origin and relative worth. Humility is not, therefore, a mere cloister or barren virtue. It lies at the root of all virtues; it is the admission of truth—the seeing ourselves, or at least endeavoring to see ourselves, as we really are, i. e., beings dependent on God for the very breath we draw—weak, sinful, ignorant—ever in need of the help, the mercy, the forbearance, and the forgiveness of our Creator. Poor, helpless, and naked we all come into the world, and so shall we leave it.

Conclusion.—Let us appreciate this truth now that it can be of use to us. Let us be honest and truthful—in other words, humble. If self-reliant and self-confident, it must be with dependence on God, remembering that if much is given to us much also is required, and that we must give an account of our stewardship, and that our divine Master will exact even down to the last farthing of what we owe. Let this be the lesson drawn from the story told in the Gospel of the day. Even apart from the perishable and often dangerous gifts of wealth, talent, health, and position, we can not boast or

pride ourselves even in the higher moral gifts of virtue and good conduct. The penitent publican who had a bad record behind him grew suddenly better and more acceptable to God than the boasting self-conceited Pharisee, notwithstanding his previous record of temple-going and apparent virtue and good works. For "he that thinketh himself to stand let him take heed lest he fall" (I. Cor. x. 12). "Not every one that sayeth, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21).

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR BLESSED LADY A TRADITION IN THE CHURCH.

BY THE VERY REV. P. A. SHEEHAN, D.D.

SYNOPSIS.—*Teaching of Church definite and precise. Example: The doctrine of the Incarnation and its collateral dogmas. Church always ready to honor Mary, but never lets this honor interfere with the worship due to her Son. Always insists on the vast difference between the Son and His Mother. The Assumption peculiar to the Blessed Virgin. What is meant by the Assumption? The place this feast holds in the Church to-day. Many Bishops desired to have this doctrine defined. Past ages clung tenaciously to the belief in the Assumption. Testimony of St. John of Damascus, of St. Bernard, of Suarez, St. Thomas, of the formularies of the early Church, St. Peter Damian, St. Gregory of Tours—thus going back to sixth century. Propositions against this belief of the faithful were rejected and condemned. Relics of the bodies of the Saints always cherished by the Church even in Apostolic times—hence we have relics even of the earliest Saints—but we have no relic of the body of the Blessed Virgin. Hence that body must have been assumed.*

Conclusion.—*Power of Blessed Virgin seen from her relationship with our Lord and from her Assumption. Many have devoted their lives to her service. Have had their reward. She is ever generous with her gifts. Serve her always, and she shall crown you with immortal life.*

The teachings, dear brethren, of the Catholic Church are, as you are aware, marked by extreme accuracy. There is no height so exalted that theology does not explore, for, as has been said, "the science of theology extends on the one hand to the infinite God, and on the other to the tiniest atom," and yet we find that when the Church teaches by the universal voice of the people, or defines through the lips of her Councils or her Supreme Pontiff, that teaching is as precise and definite as if all the subjects of it came under the domain of human reason. Now, in nothing is this more remark-

able than in her treatment of the doctrine of the Incarnation itself, and all the collateral dogmas that belong to it, especially the relationship between Mother and Son. She unites them both in her worship, and yet the worship paid to the Mother is never allowed to diminish in the least the worship that is paid to the Son; even when she seems to stand alone before the eyes of the Church, she does not eclipse her Child, but reflects all the glory with which the Church surrounds her upon Him; the Church is always emphatic in insisting upon the close intimate relationship of the Son and the Mother, and yet she tells us with no less emphasis, that between Him the Creator and her the creature there is a wide gulf of separation, a difference in origin, in nature, in attributes, in dignity so vast, that neither His filial love for her nor her maternal love can ever lessen it by a single span. This is observable even in the feasts of the year that are dedicated to our Lord or to His blessed Mother. There is a marked correspondence between the titles and the objects of the feasts that are held in honor of our blessed Lord and those that are held in honor of His immaculate Mother. To the Annunciation, which is simply the conception of the Word made flesh, corresponds the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin; to Good Friday, the Feast of Seven Dolors; to the Ascension, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven. This correspondence marks the Church's sense of the close union that must always exist between the Mother and the Son. But, if we examine closely we shall find that even in her choice of words the Church is most particular that we may not misunderstand her doctrine, nor confound the worship we pay to Mary with the worship we pay to Jesus.

In celebrating, therefore, this feast of Mary's corporal assumption into heaven, the Church has consulted for her honor, and in her choice of the word "Assumption" and the meaning she attaches to it she has marked the distinction between the operations of nature in the Ascension of Christ and the operations of grace in the Assumption of His Mother. The Assumption, therefore, of our Blessed Lady is recognized as a privilege peculiar to herself; for it marks the distinction between the glorification of Mary's body, effected by a power not her own, and the glorification of the body of Christ, effected by His own omnipotence, whilst it proves Mary's vast superiority over all other creatures of God, inasmuch as her resurrection was the work of God, and if she shared the penalty of death in common with all the children of Adam, she was saved from that

dissolution which follows upon death by the special favor of the Almighty.

We shall not examine to-day the reason of Mary's assumption, nor its appropriateness, but merely show that, although not yet defined, it is the doctrine of the Catholic Church at present, and has been the doctrine of the Catholic Church from the times of the apostles. It is understood, then, that our Blessed Lady has really departed this life, and is really no longer upon earth. Likewise, that she has been admitted to the Beatific Vision in heaven, and is in securest possession of God for eternity. These two things are common to our Blessed Lady and every canonized saint. But by the word assumption, which is now restricted in its meaning to this particular application, we understand that our Blessed Lady was exempted from the law of corruption to which the bodies of men after death are subjected, and that by special providence of God, she rose after death, as the saints shall rise at the last day, body and soul, glorious and immortal, and was thus admitted to the eternal happiness of heaven. And the very word itself implies that it was not by the exercise of her own power, but the omnipotent love of her divine Son that she was thus glorified.

That the Catholic Church at present teaches the doctrine of Mary's corporal assumption into heaven as clearly and explicitly as it is possible short of a definition is a fact that it would be senseless to deny. The Feast of the Assumption is held by the authority of the Church; the Missal and Breviary speak in the clearest terms of the assumption; the doctrine is preached from every pulpit, without exception, in the Catholic Church; the belief is held firmly and piously by the laity through the world, and, like the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, it has had but few opponents, and these were stifling their own convictions. It was hoped by many that the Holy Father would have proposed the dogma to be defined by the Vatican Council. The venerable Bishop of Nimes in his pastoral letter on the Vatican Council indicated his opinion not only that the doctrine was definable, but that its truth was so clear that no preliminary discussion was required. And the Archbishop of Smyrna had petitioned the Holy Father that as God had inspired him to preach to the world Mary's privilege of Immaculate Conception, so he might set at rest forever the minds of Christians as to the ultimate triumphs of Mary over sin and death by proposing for the Church's acceptance the doctrine of her Assumption.

But although this fresh triumph has been for the time denied our blessed Mother, the living voice of the Church is emphatic and unhesitating in professing its belief. And as if to link together its own testimony and the testimony of dead saints, it quotes in its office for the day of the Assumption itself and for its octave sentences and sermons to show how tenaciously in past ages the Church clung to this belief. Thus in the parts of the sermons of St. John of Damascus and St. Bernard that are quoted into the Breviary, the Assumption of our Blessed Lady is in as many words asserted. "Mary is the living ark of the living God, which has its resting place in the temple of the Lord." She is the "Living Paradise" taken up into heaven; in her the old "curse" of death is broken. "The immaculate Virgin, stained by no earthly affection, did not return to earth; but because she was herself a living heaven has her place in the tents of heaven." "How could she taste death, from whom flowed life to all?" She did, however, die, because she was a daughter of the old Adam, but she was fitly taken up to the living God, because she was His Mother." These are the words of St. Thomas of the Greeks, read on the day of the feast, and from his sermons also are taken extracts to show that the belief in our Lady's death and assumption are an ancient tradition of the Church.

Now, dear brethren, it is clear to every Catholic mind, that since the doctrine of our Lady's assumption is taught by the Catholic Church at present, it must have been the teaching of the Catholic Church from all time. Because innovations in doctrine are impossibilities; the deposit of faith was given once and for ever, and does not admit of additions or improvements. In quoting, therefore, the testimony of past ages, we do so, not with a view of proving the doctrine, but simply to show the devotion to Mary that always existed in the Church.

As a witness to the faith of the Church three hundred years ago, we have Suarez, the great Jesuit theologian, asserting "that the Blessed Virgin, a little time after death, arose to glory and the immortal life of body and soul and then ascended gloriously into heaven." This, he says, is the belief of the Universal Church. The Synod of Jerusalem, held about the same time under the Patriarch Dositheus, cites and proclaims as its own belief the doctrines contained in Cyril Lucas' homily on the death of the Mother of God, and these doctrines are summed up in three propositions: " (1) The all-holy Virgin's death arose not from sin, but solely from other

causes purely physical ; (2) she is the great sign in heaven spoken of in the Apocalypse ;" (3) and " she is called a great sign, because she went up into heaven, taking her body with her."

If we go back three hundred years from the time of Suarez, we find the belief of the Church at the time professed by him who has been called " the angel of the schools," and who is unquestionably the greatest theologian of the Catholic Church, St. Thomas Aquinas. " It is our belief," he says, " that after death the Blessed Virgin was raised to life again and carried into heaven, according to the Psalm, ' Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark which thou hast made holy.' "

Four centuries before the time of St. Thomas we find that the Feast of the Assumption was kept with fast and vigil, and that it ranked in the order of feasts with Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. And in the formularies of the Church at the time it is said that this custom has been received from antiquity, and the Church has always observed it. And in the sacramentaries of the Church, the Gallican, Gothic, and Gregorian Missals we find in the prayers and prefaces of the Mass of the feast, Mary's corporal assumption asserted. St. Peter Damian, in his Sermon on the Assumption, says : " With the eyes of the mind look upon the Son as He ascends and on the Mother as she is assumed, and you shall see a something surpassing exhibited in the ascension of the Son, and a something glorious shown forth in the assumption of the Virgin. For the Saviour went up into heaven by authority of His powerful might, as Lord and Creator, accompanied by the service of angels, not supported by their aid ; Mary was taken up into heaven, but by a decree of grace, which raised her up, with the accompaniment and aid of angels. For grace, not nature, supported her beneath. Hence this day is named the Assumption, the other the Ascension, since power is different from mercy and it is the Creator's privilege alone to overpass the nature of things by His own power."

In the ninth century, Theodore Studita wrote, after describing our Blessed Mother as the true Mount Sion in which it pleased God to dwell, " To-day then the earthly heaven," he says, " -wrapped round with the robe of incorruption is removed to an abode, which is happier and lasting." And Gregory of Tours, in the sixth century, wrote, " And lo ; again the Lord stood up, and ordered the holy body to be taken up and carried to Paradise ; where now, united to the soul, and rejoicing in company with the elect, it enjoys the good things of eternity which shall come to all."

Here, dear brethren, we have a chain of evidence reaching as far back as the sixth and fifth centuries, and showing that the doctrine of Mary's assumption was the belief in all those centuries of the Universal Church, and that the Catholic doctrine has not been modified, but is the same in the nineteenth that it was in the fifth century. We have quoted the testimony of saints and doctors, but we find even in the schools of theology, where doctrinal questions were so often fiercely debated, and nothing was admitted as the faith of the Church, except it were proved to be so by the unanswerable testimony of contemporaneous and past authority, that the doctrine of the assumption held the same place it holds in the hearts of the faithful. In the year 1497, two propositions assailing the truth of the doctrine of the assumption were advanced and defended by two doctors before the Theological Faculty of Paris. We may gather the sense and the opinions of France from the censures that were passed on these two propositions. The proposition "that Christ met the Virgin Mary in her assumption is apocryphal" was condemned as "false, contrary to the Fathers, favoring irreverence, offensive to pious ears, calculated to turn the people from their devotion to the Virgin Mother of God," and had, therefore, to be "retracted." The second proposition was, "We are not bound to believe, under pain of mortal sin, that the Virgin was assumed in body and soul, because it is not an article of faith." That proposition was condemned as "rash, scandalous, impious, calculated to lessen the people's devotion toward the Blessed Virgin, false and heretical," and it had, therefore, to be publicly retracted.

We shall conclude by mentioning one fact. There is no Catholic who does not know the care the Church has always manifested about the preservation of the relics of her saints. Now this reverence for the mortal remains of God's servants can be traced back to apostolic times. The result of this is that there is scarcely a single saint, of the early Church, of whom we do not possess a relic, and I need not say, that the greater the saint, the greater the care that would be manifested about the preservation of his relics. Now the Catholic Church has never possessed a single relic of our Blessed Mother. We must, therefore, conclude, either that the Church, which has always manifested extraordinary solicitude about the bodies of the servants of God, took no care whatever to preserve the sacred remains of her, who gave her flesh and blood to the Redeemer of the world, or else that the corporal assumption of our Blessed Lady is

an indisputable fact, and that the belief in it is simply that tradition of the Church which originated with those apostles, who stood by the grave of the Virgin of virgins, and found that God, by raising that sacred ark from the grave, had preserved her body from corruption as He had preserved her soul from sin.

There is something, dear brethren, ineffably consoling in examining the testimony of centuries that have passed into eternity and of saints who have gone to their rest, and finding, however high we may ascend on the stream of tradition, that the Church has been unswerving in its fidelity and devotion to the ever-blessed Mother of God. Changes have come over the spirit of the Church from time to time; at times the fervor of the faithful has cooled, and at times it has increased; but devotion to the Mother of God in the Catholic Church seems to admit of no increase; it was as fervent in the time of the apostles as it is now. When we read the writings of such fervent advocates in our age as St. Alphonsus Liguori or Father Faber, it seems to us that no saint of the Church has at any time written so eloquently the praises of Mary; and that class of Catholics, who hover between God and the world, and have not fully declared for either, may perhaps deem these praises extravagant; but we find, if we examine into the past, that there have been saints, who had as tender a devotion to the Mother of God as either, and devoted their whole lives to her service and her love. In fact, it has been always clearly recognized in the Church, that as Mary occupied a prominent place in the redemption of the world, so she possesses a large claim upon the gratitude of the world. And if our Blessed Lord claims our entire love, He by no means intends to exclude His Mother. You can not, therefore, dear brethren, honor the Mother of God too much; you can not too fully confide in her. You can not honor her too much, because we know that every offering we make to Mary finds its resting place in the Sacred Heart of her divine Son. We can not confide too fully in her. She held Omnipotence itself in her arms; and He communicated this attribute to her: She is the dispenser of the infinite blessings of redemption. Neither check nor limits are imposed upon her benevolence. There is no such virtue known to her as economy of divine graces. "They who work by her, shall not sin." God adorned her with his graces, and her life of grace was crowned by her assumption. She can act similarly with us. She can clothe us with pure robes of innocence here, and crown us with immortality in heaven.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."—Luke x. 27.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—I. The Love of God and what it means.

1. Charity is a disposition of soul which makes us do all to please God. 2. It has three degrees. We should attain to the highest. 3. It is to love Him as far as our hearts are capable of loving. 4. Its presence is shown by universal, constant, and sincere obedience.

II. The motives which oblige us to love God. 1. Because He is infinitely amiable and lovable in Himself. 2. Because He has an infinite authority over us. 3. Because we should be grateful for His mercies.

III. How to increase in this love, how to grow in charity. 1. By continual and fervent prayer. 2. By doing all our works for His honor and glory. 3. By contemplating the lives of the saints. Ask daily: "What must I do to gain eternal life?"

The question of the lawyer, brethren, is one of the most important that we can conceive: "What must I do to possess eternal life?" This should ever be the study, the continual thought of each of us. For time compared with eternity shows us that the one is but a few fleeting years, whilst the other is one long endless duration. When time is passed for us, we will pass from this state into one that will be unalterable, that will be unchangeable and permanent. And in that long life beyond the tomb we will either live in bliss or suffer terrible misery. There will be but two positions in the next world—that of the blessed and that of the damned. No sane man will surely choose the latter, and yet it will be his unless he labors for the salvation of his soul, for eternal life. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" (Mark viii. 36). See, then, the necessity of asking ourselves the question which was put to Christ. The lawyer was one who was well versed in the law, one whose duty it was to expound it, and he only asked our Lord that he might ensnare Him in his words. We, too, know the law; we know well the answer to the question; yet how very seldom do we act up to it. To impress it more deeply on our hearts, we will dwell upon the love we owe to God, and see what loving God means, what are the motives obliging us to love Him, and, finally, how we are to increase this love to grow in charity.

I. 1. Charity, or that love which we must have for God, is a disposition of the heart by which we cling to Him, and which causes us to think, do, and say that which always pleases Him. This disposition also moves us to renounce in every case what displeases Him, at least in any serious matter. And we are moved to act thus, not through mere hope of reward or fear of punishment, but chiefly because He is goodness itself, and worthy on this account alone to be loved and served. Charity, then, is a deliberate choice of our heart or will by which we give ourselves wholly to God on account of His infinite goodness and holiness, and are determined to do His holy will in all things, and to suffer death itself rather than offend by even one mortal sin. But we must be careful and be sure that we have this charity, lest we be deluded and take the shadow for the reality. Some fancy it consists in mere external acts; others that it is sentiment or feeling, which quickly vanish when tested by pain or afflictions; some would have it to be mere church going, and act as though it were not required in private life, but they are wrong. The love of charity mentioned here is that which thoroughly enters into, penetrates, and inflames and moves the whole heart to love and serve God cheerfully and with delight. It fears not suffering; it delights in pain and affliction when borne in the service of our Creator. Such a love produces undeniable, distinct, and emphatic proofs of its presence in our souls. For whenever this charity exists in man's heart it will manifest itself in sterling obedience both in public and private life; not in a few things, but in every one that concerns the will of God. Hence, though men speak much about the love of God, though they appear to be good, let them ever doubt their so-called love for God unless it produces in them a thorough and true obedience to all His commands. Just as our souls dwell in and animate our bodies, and we know of its presence by the very action of our bodies, so charity gives life to and animates many other virtues, subordinates them, rules and directs them to its own end. It is the noblest of all virtues, the root of all others, and especially does it show and manifest its presence in the heart by producing perfect obedience. Just as we delight to serve those whom we love, so charity delights to obey God in all things.

2. But there are degrees in charity. The first degree causes us to renounce, for God's sake, all mortal sin, and this degree is absolutely necessary for salvation. The second causes us to renounce not only mortal, but even venial sin, for the sake of God, and this is more

pleasing to Him. In the third degree, we wish God to receive all praise, adoration, love, and glory, and we ourselves do that which is most pleasing to Him, and endeavor to make others do the same. This is true and perfect charity, and this love for God we must strive to attain to. The more the child experiences its mother's great love and tender care for its welfare, the more it learns to love and obey her. So we, studying the great mercy and tenderness of God, not only to us but to all men, must learn to love God more, and not stop at the first or second degree, but do our utmost to attain the third, the highest and the best.

3. The law of God commands us to love Him with our "whole heart," that is, we must love Him as much as these hearts of ours can love. This, indeed, is most right and proper, for He Himself made these hearts and He is most worthy of being loved. He has given each of us an intellect and will capable of a degree of love and knowledge proportionable to their natural powers. And has He not manifested His greatness and His glory to us, and which are most lovely in themselves? Therefore, He asks nothing but that which He has every right to, and that which we are quite able to give; hence every child of the human race is capable of perfect conformity with the law. Any difficulties that we meet come not from God or the law, but from our own weakness, our proneness to evil, our inclinations and bad habits. The child that is asked how much it loves its parents will often answer, "As much as ever I can." Here he means as much as his heart and soul are capable of loving; in other words, he loves his parents with his whole heart. Thus must we love God with all the power and natural capacity of our hearts.

4. But wherever there is real love of God, there also obedience is found, and the qualities of that obedience will show us the measure and quality of our charity. First, then, our obedience must be sincere. It must not be Pharisaical, consisting merely in external actions; it must also have an interior affection of the mind. This affection will influence a man's action as well in secret as in public, and it is this intention or affection which God especially regards, and which distinguishes the saint from the sinner. Secondly, our obedience must be universal; that is, we must obey the laws of God in every particular, for the man who obeys in some instances and not in all, shows that in these particular cases when he disobeys he prefers, and therefore loves, his own will more than God's; and the

greater his disobedience, the less love has he for his Creator. Thirdly, our obedience must be constant and persevering in time, as well as universal in extent. For the man who falls into little sins now and then does not lose but lessens his love for God; yet the man who every now and then breaks away and falls into grave crimes, who only serves God by fits and starts, shows that his love is weak, unstable, if indeed he has any love at all. Interior love, then, is manifested by external obedience, and if our obedience is sincere, universal, and constant, then we may hope that our love of God is such also; then, too, we may dare to say that we love Him with our whole hearts. Cheerful and willing should we love our Father, not with a servile, but a filial, affection, remembering that "perfect love casteth out fear" (I. John iv. 18).

II. 1. There are many reasons obliging us to love God, and now let us dwell upon a few of them. The first and principal reason is His infinite dignity and amiableness. We are to love Him, precisely because He is what He is, precisely because His infinite perfection in every way exhibits Him to us as infinitely good and amiable. This is the first and chief ground upon which this law of love is founded. "I am the Lord" (Exod. xx. 2). This, then, should be the first motive that should induce us to love Him, because He is the Lord, infinitely good, infinitely amiable and beautiful. He indeed deserves our love just because His amiability and excellence make Him lovely. When a person on this earth is lovely and honorable, reason teaches us that we ought to love him, and that it is wrong to dislike him or treat him with contempt, and the more lovely he is the more aggravating is the sin of our contempt and dislike. Has not even the giddy worldling admired, respected, and, in his heart, loved the saints? Many worldlings admired and loved them because they were good, true, honorable, and just; and in time they were led to imitate them. Apply this then to God, and see how much more we should love Him. And what are the consequences of this? It will make us strive as far as possible to become like to Him we love, and this is just what the law requires. To suppose that a man loves God for what He is, and yet does not endeavor to become like Him, is an evident contradiction. If, then, we truly love God, we will endeavor by every means in our power to become good, holy, and just, to become like to Him. And this, we repeat, is especially what He requires of us.

2. But our obligation to love God is still more wonderfully in-

creased if we think of His infinite authority, and the fact that His distinct command has enjoined this duty upon us. Not only is it right and proper that we should love Him for what He is, but when we consider what entire right He has to us as His creatures, who have received all we possess from, and are absolutely dependent upon Him for all we want, we clearly see that it is, of its own nature, both most proper and right He should impose this duty or law upon us. He has a natural right to all His creatures, and to their actions, and, therefore, it is but natural also that He has a complete authority over them. And if we notice how anxious He appears to be that this law should be obeyed, so anxious as to threaten damnation for disobeying it, then we must understand that He lays us under a most strict obligation to do as He requires.

3. We may yet add another reason or motive, which still more increases our obligation, and that is a motive of gratitude. If we consider the merciful and long suffering ways which God has taken with sinners in this world since they rebelled against and became His enemies, and cast aside His authority and practically defied Him, our hearts will surely be grateful and full of love for Him. Instead of immediately hurling us into hell, He sent His only begotten Son to open a way of penance for us which would lead to happiness and bliss. Think of the life of Christ, how He poured out His love upon sinners; contemplate what the redemption of the world cost Him. Who, indeed, that looks at the life of our Lord, who that reviews His terrible Passion and death, can be hard and stony hearted any longer? Does not the agony in the garden, the scourging at the pillar, the crowning with thorns, and the crucifixion appeal to us? Can we for a moment refuse to love that God who "first hath loved us?" (I. John iv. 19). Surely, love begets love; surely, the study of God's great mercies to us sinners must win our hearts and make it easy and delightful to love and serve Him.

III. 1. Many more reasons may be given to show the obligation we are under of loving God most truly, but let us turn and see how we can increase our love, how we can grow in charity. The greater our knowledge of God is, the more lovely will He appear to us, and hence the greater will our love for Him become. To study the wonderful works of God as portrayed in the universe is good; to dwell upon His great power and actions as its Ruler is most beneficial, but the chief means of knowing God is earnest and continual prayer. In prayer the mind and heart communes with God

and He communes with us. How the saints loved mental prayer; how sweet it was to them. What made it so? Because they went to God; they laid their requests before Him; they listened to His words; they followed His guidance. And in their hours of prayer they learnt things which no one else could teach them. He spoke to and touched their hearts; He opened their hearts and minds and made them fully understand the marvelous beauty and grandeur of sanctity and holiness, and in doing so God made them understand Himself, for He indeed is sanctity and holiness itself. The little child that rests upon his mother's knee, his head resting on her bosom, can put all his difficulties before her, and gazing upon her features he can listen to her loving advice, and at the same time discover more and more the beauty, the modesty, and the love that are to be found impressed upon her loving features. And as he gazes and listens, her words sink into his soul, and his heart is filled with greater love for her, and she becomes dearer to him than ever. So in fervent prayer we can, like Mary, rest at His feet (Luke x. 42), and drink in His holy inspirations, and harken to His advice, and this is indeed the "better part." Ah, who indeed can estimate the value of true, fervent, continual prayer? Through it we learn to know God, and to know Him is to love Him. The more our knowledge increases the greater will our love for Him become, yet think of the knowledge we gain of God through earnest and continual prayer.

2. Another means to increase our charity or love of God is to make a rule to do all things for the greater glory of God. Things done at haphazard or without reference to time or manner are often omitted or at least done slovenly. But by such a rule we fix the time for our daily duties and the day of the week for our special spiritual. Thus the hour is fixed for our morning and evening prayers, for spiritual reading, meditation, and other holy exercises of the day. And the days for going to confession and receiving holy communion are likewise settled. Hence they are not missed, or left out. But our rule goes further, and enters into the manner in which we do these things. It makes us perform these actions with greater perfection; that is, we perform them with exactness, punctuality, perseverance, and fervor. And, best of all things, it causes us to perform them with the desire of pleasing and honoring God. This last motive greatly increases and enhances our works in the sight of our Father. Hence gradually this rule will become the

means of making us love God more and more, and so be the means of increasing our charity.

3. The last means we will mention is contemplation of the lives of the saints. They were beings of flesh and blood like ourselves, and when on earth held positions similar to ours. They had the same commandments to keep, the same moral laws to obey. The contemplation of their lives will show us the spirit that animated them, and the way in which God treated them. We can not but catch some of that enthusiasm, that love which inspired the saints, and their very example, if not their voices, will cry out: "Love God and obey, love Him because He is infinitely good, merciful, and amiable, most worthy of love."

Brethren, try to remember every day at morning prayers to say to yourself: "What must I do to gain eternal life?" The love of God is absolutely necessary for salvation. Yet is not your salvation the only thing that should concern you; what else is of greater importance, or what is of any importance but this? Time will soon pass, and at the moment of death we will cross the threshold of eternity. Shall that eternity be one of bliss, or torture; shall it be passed in heaven or hell? We must settle that now, by leading a good, holy life, by loving God, who is so amiable and lovely in Himself and merciful to us. Ever labor to increase your love of God, by prayer, by doing all for His glory, but looking at what the saints did. Again and again listen to Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength."

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

BY THE REV. W. R. CARSON.

"Go show yourselves to the priests."—Luke xvii. 14.

SYNOPSIS.—I. *Sin. The Fact of Sin. The Strength of Sin. The Need of Help. God alone can Help. His Aid Through Christ.* II. *The application of Christ's aid to us through the Sacrament of Penance. The Institution of this Sacrament.* III. *Confession—a necessary corollary of the power of absolution.* IV. *The Power of Absolution. By what power the priest forgives sins.* V. *Contrition—The Qualities of a good confession.*

Sin is a fact. There is no one living to-day who has not felt its burn, its sting, its poison. It does not need that I should dwell at length on the reality of sin in the world, for it is emphatically not merely a question of religion or of philosophy, but a practical question. So we can not be surprised that the great work which each of us longs to do is the destruction of this fatal power of evil, and that the consolation for which the soul cries out in its sore agony is a cure for the sin that has eaten its way into its life, upsetting all peace of heart. "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24) is the weary cry of many a man and woman conscious of repeated falls and despairing of ultimate recovery.

For this is the sad peculiarity of sin that we can not deal with it as we would with other difficulties that cross our path. A man may have naturally a strong, unbending will in every affair of life, and yet fall again and again into some sin which he despises from his heart and which he knows to be robbing him of his manhood and his self-respect. He resolves that he will conquer it—only perhaps on that very day to succumb to the first assault. The whole nature may grow and expand; the will become stronger and more resolute, and side by side with this development of intellectual and moral powers we find an increasing spiritual deterioration, sensual and sinful.

Look at the ancient world: Rome with its marvels of civilization, its world-wide government, its conquering legions; Greece with its unrivaled wealth of art, sculpture, and literature. Here were men

developing their natural powers to the utmost, and yet sadly conscious that there was another side to their nature daily pandering to the vilest and grossest passions, so that they were compelled in sheer helplessness to look to another for succor, for they saw in their misery and dismay that they had no power to help themselves.

This heartfelt sense of the need of a remedy for sin from outside is universal. We all at times feel our own weakness, our bitter want of some one to aid us. Why is this? It arises from the very nature of sin. For what is sin? It is an offence against God—an infinite offence, since it offends an infinite Being; an insult offered to the Almighty which all the tears of humanity could never wash away. The wisest man who has ever lived can not of himself destroy its traces or break its fatal power.

God alone can forgive the sin, as He alone can pay the sinner's debt. From the sad day when our first parents through disobedience forfeited for themselves and for us that happy state of innocence, free from sorrow, care, evil, disease, and death, in which they were originally placed by the free bounty of the Lord God, who conversed with them in the cool of the evening as a friend with a friend—from that day when sin overran the fair field of man's nature, through the long centuries that have intervened up to the present moment, we have all been born under this same blighting curse, subject to the same law of sin, unable of our own strength to blot out the evil deeds that mar our souls' pure innocence, powerless to find absolution and relief.

God Himself must be our Saviour in order to efface our sin, to forgive our ingratitude. This was the great work of the Son of God when He lived on earth—to destroy the power of the evil one, to absolve as one having authority, even the authority of the Almighty. His precious blood, poured out so freely for our redemption on the bitter cross, became the one fountain for the washing away of sin, the one source of cleansing and pardon. On the cross God and man were reconciled, for there God Himself, wearing the garb of our mortality, "taking the form of a servant, . . . and in habit found as a man" (Phil. ii. 7, 8), paid in full the debt of sin, set forever the sinner free, when He offered in his stead a sacrifice full, perfect, all-sufficient, in atonement for every sin in the long catalogue of human crime. The work of the Son of God was accomplished when, in His own Person, He offered Himself as a fitting Victim for the sins of men. That word of thankful relief

uttered when death's shadows were fast falling around Him—"It is finished"—testified to the full completeness of the sacrifice of the cross as a reparation for the offences innumerable and great, past, present, and to come, of the whole human race.

Thus did Jesus Christ finish His work of reconciliation as our Redeemer. But how did He intend to apply this priceless gift of pardon to individual souls? Daily, alas! we fall from grace; daily, the sin of Adam is repeated by us; daily, we exchange freely the obedience, the joy of Eden for the rebellion that shuts its gates against us; daily, we lose God's friendship and become His enemies. Is, then, the work of reconciliation a thing of the long-forgotten past? Surely not. Jesus Christ Himself has told us in words so plain and unambiguous, under circumstances so solemn, that it is hard to understand how any one can mistake their meaning. We read in the twentieth chapter of St. John's Gospel that on the evening of His resurrection He appeared to His apostles as they sat, sorrowful and fearful, behind closed doors in the upper chamber, and greeting them with a message of peace, gives them authority in His name to carry the message of reconciliation, to apply the efficacy of the precious blood, to all men.

"Jesus," we read, "came and stood in the midst and said to them: Peace be to you. . . . As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" (John xx. 19, 21, 23).

Happy, thrice happy, words of hope, consolation, and joy! Blessed message restoring the sinner to the primeval peace of Eden! Behold! O man, the promise of thy reconciliation with God, the pledge of His renewed friendship, the foretaste of His everlasting reward. For in this "ministry of reconciliation" instituted by the Redeemer, the blood of Calvary is poured over the sin-stricken soul; the sinner, who is God's child in spite of his ingratitude, is restored to the embrace of his Father's loving arms, to the kiss of His blessed peace.

Observe, brethren, in the first place, the identity of the commission. The apostles are declared to be sent forth with a like authority, on a like mission, to Jesus Christ Himself—a mission of glad tidings of pardon to sin-burdened souls, an authority none other than the authority of God. As Christ in the power of God, in the name of God, forgave sinners, so His representatives are sent forth by Him as messengers of forgiveness to the contrite and broken-hearted.

But that there might be no possible mistake as to His meaning, our divine Lord emphasizes His charge. "Receive ye," He declares, "the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." What words could be plainer? Jesus Christ states with the utmost clearness how the work for which He died—the work of pardoning the penitent, of destroying the ravages of sin on the soul—was to be perpetuated in every land, in every age, until His coming again. The apostles, and all who are to succeed them in their ministry, are charged by the Redeemer to apply to men the fruits of His atoning Passion, to destroy the power of evil. Power is left with the Church of God to forgive sin, to reconcile the sinner with his Father in heaven.

This has been the claim of the Catholic Church from the beginning. She, the Bride of the Lamb, has never ceased to utter through the mouth of her ministers absolving words of healing, grace, and life to the truly repentant.

She has, moreover, demanded a confession of grievous or mortal sins (such sins as utterly destroy friendship with God and, if unforgiven, entail eternal loss) as a necessary sign of penitence on the part of the sinner before absolution can be given.

This confession for a long time was public, being made in the face of the Church, as the Protestant writer Hooker admits.* When, however, faith's first fervor waned, the practice of private or auricular confession for notorious sins (which previously it had been usual to confess publicly), as well as for secret sins, came into vogue so that by the twelfth century all grievous sins, whether of a public or private character, were wont to be confessed secretly to a duly appointed priest.†

The principle in both cases, you will readily see, was the same. Whether public or private confession was exacted, the priest who pronounced absolution came, it has been well said by a non-Catholic writer, ‡ "clothed with divine power as a messenger from heaven; not merely as a human friend or authorized guide, but as an organ of the [Lord's] Body for the communication of remedial powers."

* Ecclesiastical Polity, I., ch. 4, sec. 13.

† Cf. Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 16 (ed. Wace & Schaff, 1891). For the history of the abolition of the office of Poenitentiarius at Constantinople, see Sozomen (*op. cit.*, *Select Library of the Fathers*, ii., pp. 386-7).

‡ Rev. R. M. Benson, "Report of Fulham Round Table Conference, 1902."

The reason of this preliminary requirement of confession before absolution can be given is not far to seek. From the words of Christ already quoted, His representatives are made spiritual physicians, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, for sin-sick souls. But if physicians, plainly they must know the diseases of their patients, else how can they hope to cure them? In other words, they must know the exact nature of the sin if they would remedy its disease. And this they do by confession made by the penitent.

Further, in Matthew xviii. 18, our Lord addresses these solemn words to His apostles: "Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." Thus the ministers of Christ's Church are not only appointed physicians but judges—judges with full powers of binding the sinner with severe penalties or of releasing him from his sin. Now a judge, perhaps even more than a physician, must know the sin—its nature, its extent—if he is to pass sentence upon the guilty sinner. What would you say of a doctor who ventured to prescribe remedies without first of all diagnosing the symptoms of your disease; or of a judge who dared to sentence to imprisonment or to release a prisoner whose cause he had not thoroughly examined?

Similarly, it would be the height of absurdity for the priest to pronounce forgiveness as judge unless he had previously investigated the sin. This he does through the sincere confession of the sinner, just as he fulfils his office of physician by listening to the sinner's story, and so understanding the nature of the sin.

The Catholic Church, I have said, has never failed to teach the literal truth of Christ's words and their corollary in the necessity of confession before absolution. And in this she does but make provision for a deep-seated need of human nature. The sinner, conscious of his sin, knowing that he is thereby separated from God, demands a remedy. He feels that he must wash out the foul stain that he may be reconciled to God. In his sore distress, pricked by the sharp goads of conscience—that "aboriginal vicegerent" of the Creator in his soul, to use Cardinal Newman's phrase—he longs to confess his guilt, imploring thereby pardon for it. Life—the spiritual life of his soul—has died, and it can not revive of itself. As in holy baptism it was given him freely by God, so when lost it can only be regained by the free act of God's restoration consequent upon the sinner's repentance manifested in humble confession of his

sin, and that restoration of life to man is forgiveness of sin in the Sacrament of Penance.

And here let me say a few words on a widespread misunderstanding among Protestants on the subject. Perhaps the commonest objection to Catholic teaching is based on a perverse misuse of the words of my text, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Now I answer without hesitation that the Church teaches her children emphatically that no one can forgive sins but God alone. The priest is no more than the instrument of God, His messenger, His ambassador. Does he absolve the sinner in his own name? Not at all. "I absolve thee," he says, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He is the channel of Christ's grace by Christ's own commission. The priest's own character or goodness does not affect one whit his power as the minister of God. It is not the man—the sinful erring man—who forgives; it is God Himself, the Redeemer, the Saviour, who speaks through his mouth the words of absolution.

God, brethren, does not act directly in sending us warmth, in giving us health, money, the society of friends, food, enjoyment. No; He uses natural instruments, and so, too, in spiritual things. How is the Gospel message brought home to men? Is it not by preaching? and what is this but a means, a channel through which God extends the Kingdom of His Son on earth? Men no more usurp the place of God when they pronounce the words of absolution in His name than missionaries do when they preach Christ to the heathen, or than the Bible does when men ponder over its inspired doctrine. Men are instruments, even as the Bible is an instrument.

Furthermore, this forgiveness of sins through the ministry of man is not a piece of mere external formalism. A common mistake of Protestants is on this very point. They think that the Catholic Church teaches that one may sin as freely as he likes and then confess his sins without any internal sorrow, receive a perfunctory absolution, and go away to sin as much as he pleases. Now that is a lying caricature of the God-given Sacrament of Penance. For the Church requires not merely an outward confession but an inward sorrow, founded, it may be, on the fear of hell, or on the thought of the black guilt and moral ugliness of the sin, yet true and heartfelt, embodying a firm resolve of avoiding all sin in the future, and of making satisfaction for the evil already done. These are necessary conditions for a valid absolution. God forgives through

His priest only those souls which turn to Him in sorrow and remorse.

The very object of confession proves its spiritual value. Sin is in its essence an act of pride, for it is a revolt against the law of God; and a true repentance must show itself contrariwise in humiliation. Confession, above all things, manifests this humble spirit in a practical way: hence its necessity.

Every good confession has three elements: it must be thorough, humble, and heartfelt. In the first place, there must be no hiding back any mortal sin, no untruthfulness, no excuses. The tribunal of penance is the place instituted by God in which we are to tell our sins to Him. We will find, if we make a bad or half confession, no peace, no remedy, but instead the pain of a gnawing remorse, the bitterness of an abiding despair. Remember that God knows our sin, and that one day the books will be opened and all men hear our shame unless we now confess our sins fully, freely, sincerely. "If we would judge ourselves," says the apostle, "we should not be judged" (I. Cor. xi. 31). By revealing our sins now in God's own appointed way, we anticipate their manifestation before men at the judgment-seat of Christ (II. Cor. v. 10).

Secondly, our confession must be humble. We kneel as sinners before a judge; we abase ourselves before the God whose majesty we have outraged. Too often we wish to recount our virtues instead of our sins, to make excuses for ourselves at the expense of others, when we go to confession. We like to bring in people's names, to say how much better we are than this or that person, how little we have really sinned. Now that attitude of mind shows clearly that we are not in a fit state for pardon. The thought of even one grievous sin should be enough to fill us with horror and shame. By it we have lost God's friendship, forfeited heaven, deserved hell. Let us see to it that we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. "He resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace" (I. Peter v. 5).

Lastly, brethren, our confession must be heartfelt. It must be the expression of our true sense of sin, our sore need for reconciliation with God. If it becomes a formal routine, a repetition of certain words in almost mechanical succession, it is worthless, nay, it injures our soul, as all spiritual gifts misused must do. Confession has to bear witness to the bitterness of our sorrow, to our firm resolve not to sin again. We want to tell our Father that we have sinned

against Him and want His forgiveness. Even as a child tells his mother that he has disobeyed her, so we must confess our sins, negligences, and backslidings to God simply, frankly, modestly, and from the heart.

And if our confession is genuine, if it truly bear witness to our penitence and to our desire for forgiveness, be sure that it will bear fruit. The words of absolution will not be meaningless, but powerful; they will reconcile us to God. By sin we have broken the soul's union with its Creator and Redeemer; by absolution that union is restored. By sin the waters of life—the life of grace—are fouled at their source; by absolution the supernatural life which we had lost is re-engrafted into us.

For by forgiveness God does not merely forget our sin; He destroys its power, and makes us whole. He pardons, He cleanses, He restores. There is a fountain open for the sinner, flowing from the five wounds of Jesus—a fountain for our healing, comforting, and relief. There is a channel through which the atoning merits of Calvary, the grace of forgiveness, peace, reconciliation, strength, and life is given to us in the Church of God. Let us see to it, brethren, that we do not despise God's ordinance nor neglect our opportunity.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

SALVATION.

BY THE RT. REV. RAPHAEL MOSS, O.P.

"What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul, or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?"—Matt. xvi. 26; or, "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice."—Matt. vi. 33.

SYNOPSIS.—The words of the text have a special message and meaning, for they sum up the whole problem of life. As God dealt with Lot on the night of the destruction of the sinful city, so now He deals with you, sending you His messengers to warn you and to help you.

1. *The importance of salvation.* (a) Salvation a real fact—not imaginary. (b) Man's action when any great danger is realized. (c) St. Francis on the mountain top.

2. *The value of a soul* (a) redeemed by Christ's precious blood; (b) companion and friend of God; (c) beyond all earthly treasures; (d) immortal.

3. *Salvation necessary.* (a) God wills it. (b) Soul created for it.

4. *Must be won by personal effort. Must be attended to at once and perseveringly. Foolishness of delay. Our Saviour's appeal to the soul. The soul's answer.*

These are the words of Our Blessed Lord—our dear and loving Saviour, who came down into this world to be "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John xiv. 6). All our Lord's words are full of light and power and grace, because they spring from the loving heart of God made man, but these words seem to have a special meaning and a special message for us, for they sum up briefly and clearly the whole problem of life. They tell in words that can not be explained away why we have been placed in this world and what is the great work at which we must toil from the moment we attain the use of reason to that most solemn hour when we lay down the burden of life and close our eyes in the sleep of death. They tell us that we were not made for ourselves, but for God; that it is not our bodies which have the first claims upon us, but our souls, and that the world that passes away is altogether worthless compared with that world which will never end.

You remember perhaps that most wonderful scene in Holy Scripture, where the angels came to the Patriarch Lot as he sat in the gateway of the city of Sodom. It was in the eventide and God's messengers came to him as he sat there, grieving no doubt on ac-

count of the sins he saw around him, and yet unable or unwilling to tear himself away from the place where he had made his home. And they came not as angels, but men—in the likeness of men, yet charged with a startling message, for they bade him arise and depart and so save his own life, for that the iniquities of that most guilty city called to heaven for vengeance, and they were come to execute God's judgments. And when he still tarried and would have waited yet a little longer, they constrained him, taking him by the hand and leading him forth and bidding him flee away at once. Now, dearest brethren, we have come to you with such a message to-day. We are not angels, it is true, but are God's messengers as really and as truly as the three angels who spoke to Lot that day. We bear our divine commission, written on our souls, visible to the eye of faith. "He that heareth you heareth me." And we come to you in the name of our common Master Jesus, yet not as messengers of vengeance, but rather as heralds of richest mercy. For the iniquities of the world go up to God and cry to Him for vengeance, but the blood of Jesus cries more loudly still for mercy, and when God looks down upon your souls to-night, he sees them sealed with the mark of the true faith and crimsoned with that same most precious blood. So He bids us come to you and speak to you in His name. He bids us warn you of your dangers. He bids us constrain you by speaking plainly of the great and solemn truths of life and death and time and eternity, and repeat to you again and again, "What doth it profit to gain the whole world? Seek first," etc. In other words, our dear Lord and Master desires with all the love of His most generous, loving Sacred Heart, that you should realize the importance and the absolute necessity of working out your salvation, and that it depends on you, on each one of you, to accomplish this most necessary and important work.

Our Lord wants us to realize its importance. What does that mean? It means that all doubt, all hesitation, all wavering, should be put aside forever; it means that we should make up our minds to live for God, to work for God, to die for God. It means that we should become saints. It may have happened from time to time that we have been lying awake in the darkness of the night imagining many things. And we pass from one thing to another and weigh and compare them—leisurely, because after all it is all our imagination. But when a man is roused from his sleep by the cry of fire, and awakes to find himself choked by the thick smoke, and to

see the red glare of the fire on the windows and to hear the roaring of the flames and see the gathering crowds, he does not lie still in bed and wonder if some one will come for him, but he leaps from his bed at once and dashes down the burning stairs, or, if they be already fallen, he is ready to jump from the window and into the street below, and why? Simply because he realizes his danger and the importance of acting at once in order to save his life. Well now, our soul is in no less danger, and we must not go on dreaming; but act at once, and realize the importance of the work. And how can we do this? St. Francis of Assisi climbed the steep hillside of Mount Alvernia and there upon the lovely mountain top he looked up into the blue sky above, and through that beautiful curtain he saw the glory of God's eternal home. He looked down at the rich fields and vineyards beneath him and saw them not, for he looked beyond them and saw those dark prisons of hell where God's justice reigns supreme. And then he looked upon himself as he knelt there and realized—oh, most awful thought—he realized he was free and able to choose, but as you know he chose well and wisely, and so became a great saint. For it is no imagination, dear brethren, our soul is between heaven and hell and we are free to choose. Our soul is balanced between eternal joy and eternal misery, and it is for us to say which is to be its fate. Our soul! So precious in the sight of God! Think of the value of a soul! Compare it with what you like! Look at the great universe! What did it cost? One little word, "Dixit et facta sunt." "He spoke and it was made" (Psalm xxxii. 9). And what did your soul cost God? The blood of Jesus. Gather together all the riches of the world, all the empires and kingdoms, all the gold and silver and precious stones, then go out into the street and take up the first little child you see—some poor street waif if you like—so worthless that if it died to-night not one heart would ache, not one tear would fall—weigh the two in the balance of God, and that baby's soul will outweigh the world. And you, dear brethren, have such a soul—a soul created to the likeness of God, made to be the friend and companion of the bright angels, a soul which makes you the king of all creation—and above this soul there is heaven and its songs and its unspeakable happiness, and a bright throne still empty, and below you there is hell, darkness and misery and a prison cell; and to escape all this and to gain the other is salvation. Is it not a most important work, the most important work of all? What would you say of a gardener who left the fruit

and carefully gathered the leaves? of the farmer who threw away the wheat and gathered the straw? of the merchant who bartered pearls for glittering bits of glass? Reason and common sense tell you to work hard for that which is worth most and which you need most. How zealously you work for money, yet what is money compared to life, and what is life compared to honor? Here is something higher still, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice." First, first, first—seek first the kingdom of God. And why?

Because salvation is necessary! Holy Scripture has no more beautiful picture than that which puts before us Our Blessed Lord in the house of Martha and Mary. And you remember, no doubt, how it happened one day, that Our Lord was there and Martha was busy serving Him, and when she begged that her sister might be allowed to help her, Our Lord said: "Martha, thou art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary" (Luke x. 41, 42). Only one thing! What is this one thing? Surely to do God's will! And what does God will? Our salvation! Not to be rich, not to be happy, not to be learned, not to be amused, but to save our souls! This is the will of God—your sanctification. All else is useless. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

This is what we shall all feel some day. And God grant that it may not be too late. And therefore let us try to feel it now. Go down to some grand cathedral, or some old abbey church, where kings and princes and statesmen lie buried; stand before their marble tombs and read aloud their glories, and then ask them, "What doth it all profit?" Oh, my brethren, created to the image of God and crowned with so many bright gifts, what eternal profit came from all this glory and power and dignity. And if that soul be lost a voice would come from the depths of hell—most mournful and most heart-breaking, "*Ergo erravimus.*" Cf. *Wisd. iv.*

And thus go out to some lonely churchyard, where sleep the unknown dead—men and women who have borne a heavy burden in this life—unnoticed by the world, without joy, without pleasure, without gladness, as far as this world goes, toiling always, early and late for enough daily bread, suffering cold and heat and hunger and thirst, and then the silence of eternity. How fares it then with them? "Forever with the Lord." Cf. *Wisd. v.*

One thing then is necessary—our salvation, and we must work at it first and foremost, no matter what the cost. And we must work at it. We may not dare to trust it to others. It is our business, and

nobody else's, and we must attend to it. In other things we may trust to the help and care and attention of others, but not here. We give our children to teachers, we entrust our land to farmers, our affairs to lawyers, our health to doctors, but our salvation to no one. The sins of others will not damn us, and the virtues of others will not save us, unless we work hard and do our very best. Priests, angels, saints, Our Lady, can only help us if we help ourselves. God Himself will not save us unless we work out our salvation with fear and trembling. And oh, my beloved, we must work at this task always. It will not do to put it off. There is a voice whispering at our ear: "Yes, yes, all this is true, true enough, but all in good time, there is lots of time yet, time in abundance. Some day we will set to work." Silence that voice at once! Do you know whose voice it is? It is the voice of him who was a liar from the beginning—a murderer from the beginning. If Lot had turned away from those divine friends who bade him rise and flee at once, that very day he would have perished in the flames. Therefore to-day if you shall hear God's voice, harden not your hearts; and you do hear it, for I speak to you in the name and the authority of the Living God. Now, now, now, is the time to come to Him and listen to His words. To-morrow may be too late. God is merciful, surely He is, or He would have punished us long ago, but He is also just, and He can not allow us to go on abusing His gifts. Add not, therefore, sin to sin, delay not to be converted to the Lord, for His wrath cometh on a sudden, and in the day of vengeance He will destroy thee. Will you not then listen to His voice? Will you not open your hearts? Will you not come to Him now? Surely you have lived long enough to see you can not serve two masters, and that the world is a hard and cruel taskmaster, always promising and never performing! Is it not God's turn now? Will you not then come to Him, and trust yourselves to Him, the Master who makes Himself your servant, the Father whose love is so unwearying, the Friend whose tenderness is inexhaustible?

When Pius IV. lay dying there came to him in haste one who loved him tenderly and who was in turn most specially beloved by the dying pontiff, St. Charles Borromeo. And as he threw himself on his knees beside the bed, and felt the trembling hand of the old man resting on his head, "Holy Father," he said, "dear Holy Father, grant me one last favor, only one, and yet the greatest of all. Oh, dear Holy Father, the time has come for you to appear

before God. Forget everything and everybody else and think only of your own soul." And so we also, dear brethren, stand before you to-day to ask you one great favor—only one, yet a very great one, the greatest of all—think about your souls. That is what a mission is for—think about your souls. You will not, you can not refuse. You are Catholics, and you love your priests! You are always ready and eager to please them—you could do nothing that could please them more. No evil, no trouble, no labor will seem hard, if you will gladden our hearts in this way. And not only our hearts, but above all, before all else, the Heart which lives there on that altar throne, ever beating and throbbing for love of you—the Sacred Heart of Jesus—not to please us, not to please your priests, but to please Him, to please Jesus Christ. I plead for Him: "Oh, my child, my friend, my beloved," He is saying to each one of you, "see what I have done for you! Look at this great cross which is meant to remind you of My Love! Look at the cruel thorns around My bleeding Brows—this smart was all for you! Look at My Hands and Feet stretched out and pierced with nails—they were pierced for you! Look at My Face, white with the agony of death—it was for you! Look at My Heart, rent and torn asunder even after death—it was all for you, that you might kneel before Me and be friends with Me, and give Me love for love." And how will you answer? Will you turn away, and shut your eyes and ears and hearts to this, His loving appeal? Surely not, dearest brethren, but you will kneel down before Him and look into His loving eyes with boundless trust and confidence and say: "Yes, my loving Lord and Master! Dearest, best, and most generous of friends, I will give Thee love for love. Hitherto I have not loved Thee—hitherto I have lived for myself, but now I will try to live for Thee. I give Thee my poor, weak, sinful heart. How weak it is! How sinful it is! Thou alone knowest, but Thou canst make it strong and pure and loving and worthy of Thee, and this is all I ask. In all things, and at all times, I will seek first the kingdom of God, I will seek Thy will. I will study Thy interests, and all the rest, my life, my happiness in life, in death, and after death, I leave in Thy most loving Hands."

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO YOUNG MEN.

BY THE VERY REV. F. C. DOYLE, O.S.B.

"Young man, I say to thee, Arise."—Luke vii. 14.

SYNOPSIS.—*Pitiful was the spectacle of the widow following her son to the grave. Equally pitiful is that of the mother weeping over her child's moral death and following him in his downward career. Both fill Jesus with compassion. He listens to the mother's prayer, and, in response to it, often raises the morally dead to the life of grace, just as He waked from his death-sleep the young man of Naim. His message to each of the morally dead is, "I say to thee, Arise." (1) He gives the order. (2) He furnishes the means to carry that order into effect. First consider the various steps by which the young come to die a moral death; next, the means furnished by Christ to enable them to obey His command.*

I. Being a fallen race, we inherit the guilt of the primal transgression. The guilt is removed by baptism; the effect of the transgression remains. That effect is hostility between our spiritual faculties and our bodily instincts. These bodily instincts may develop more rapidly than our spiritual faculties, so that the young are often entangled in habits of sin before they are well aware of its horrible nature. Watchful care and the sacraments help them to rid themselves of sin; but often enough that watchfulness is not exercised, and parents send their children to schools in which they are confirmed in evil habits. These evil habits, coupled with their life in the world after leaving school, lead them to neglect their religion, to lose their faith, to die the moral death. But the prayers of those who love them reach the ears of Jesus. He graciously meets the dead. He lays His hand on their biers. He gives the order and says to them, "Arise."

*II. Having raised them to the life of grace, He bestows on them the means to live it. He gives them Himself to be the principle of their spiritual life. (1) That life consists of purity of heart, of faith, hope, and charity. *The Eucharist, in which it gives them Himself, maintains purity of heart by keeping before the mind the memory of His Passion. (2) It engenders faith by infusing morality which quickens the mental faculties and causes them to see that, in the intercourse of God with His creatures, there must be mysteries; that the greatest of those is the Eucharist itself, which affords most ample scope for the exercise of faith. (3) It fills the soul with hope, not only of beatitude, but of the aids necessary to win it, by pouring into it heavenly joy, by inspiring courage, by implanting in the flesh the germ of immortality, thus filling it with hope that will uphold its courage amid all the adversities of life. (4) It develops the divine virtue of charity by impressing upon men the fact that they are children of God and brethren in Christ Jesus. This conviction eliminates selfishness, and, by so doing, removes that which gives rise to uncharitableness. The very elements of the Eucharist help to insinuate charity; for, Christ calls it bread—a substance made of many grains; and wine—a fluid pressed from many clusters of grapes, thus intimating to those who receive the Eucharist the necessity of being*

* In this part free use has been made of the Holy Father's Encyclical Letter, "De Eucharistia"

of one mind and of one heart. Hence we conclude that, in the Holy Sacrament, Christ furnishes those whom He has ordered to rise from their moral death with all the means to obey His command and live the spiritual life to which He has raised them.

Conclusion.—If you have died the moral death; if your spiritual life received in baptism has been extinguished by passion; if you have lost faith, hope, and charity, nevertheless, when the voice of Christ sounds in your ears bidding you arise—listen to it.

I. It is a well known fact, accepted and firmly believed by all Christians, that we are a fallen race, the descendants of that primal pair who, though so richly dowered and favored by God, yet fell away from His allegiance, and by so doing forfeited the integrity in which He had created them. They, the source whence we spring, being thus corrupted, we who flow from them are also tainted with the stain of their transgression. In His infinite mercy, God has devised a means, in the Sacrament of Baptism, for removing the stain of their rebellion; but He has not thought fit to remove the consequences of it. These consequences remain. They are seen in the darkening of our intelligence and in the feebleness of our will, a condition which makes it impossible for us, unless aided by divine grace, to master the perverse inclinations of the fallen nature which is our inheritance. For in the one personality of man there are, as it were, two opposing forces ever hostile to each other—the spiritual force of the soul and the animal force or instincts of the body. These bodily instincts develop much more rapidly than the faculties of the soul, so that we are able to perceive indications of their existence in children of even a few months of age. The consequence of this more rapid development, when careful watch is not kept over them, is often seen in a precocious addition to vicious practices that startle and fill us with alarm. Hence it frequently comes to pass that the young are entangled in habits of sin before their intelligence is fully alive to its horrible nature or their will has been trained to resist the imperious demands of the flesh. They become untruthful, self-willed, irascible, proud, vindictive, and but too often, alas! they are given up to secret and shameful indulgences of the passion of lust.

Watchful care on the part of the parents and wise, patient treatment on the part of those to whom they are entrusted for the purpose of education may, and they oftentimes do, eliminate these baneful consequences of the primal fall. To aid these two means there are the powerful remedies of the sacraments, which are administered to the youthful soul when reason has sufficiently developed for their

profitable reception. Penance washes away the stains contracted; Confirmation gives the aid of the Holy Spirit; the Eucharist feeds the life of grace recovered by repentance, and thus the soul, after being cleansed of its impurities, is set once more on the path of righteousness and justice.

But in these times where shall we find that watchful care on the part of the parents? To what kind of schools do they send their offspring to fit them, as they say, for the battle of life? How do they encourage them to make use of the sacraments? Alas! they themselves are often stone blind to the dangers besetting the early years of children. Their only concern seems to be to advance their temporal prosperity, and, with this object in view, they select for them, by preference, houses of education in which education in its secular sense only is attended to, meanwhile giving to them, in their own persons, an object lesson of irreligious living and of practical unbelief. Launched into the little world of public school life, chosen for him by his parents, with only a most inadequate preparation for meeting the perils there to be encountered, the boy of fourteen or of fifteen years both sees and hears much that will kill outright whatever modesty he may have carried thither with him from his home. Year by year he returns to the paternal roof bearing with him certificates of scholarship and prizes that vouch for his proficiency in the sciences, till at last his education being completed, he leaves college with a knowledge of many things that are not set down in the school curriculum. With little and imperfect knowledge of his faith, with passions developed and craving for satisfaction, with habits of sin that envelop him as in an entangling net, he goes forth into the world to struggle for the prizes which it offers. He enters into business, or he takes up a profession, or he inherits the wealth and the position won for him by his parents. It matters not in what walk of life he finds himself, he will meet in a more developed form the enemies that have conspired to inflict upon him moral death. There is the spirit of evil to tempt and to play upon his fallen nature; there is the world with its worship of wealth and of pleasure; there is the flesh with its imperious desires craving to be gratified. Is it, then, to be wondered at that, with the training to which he has been subjected, these enemies should prove more than a match for him and that he should utterly forget the lessons, such as they were, that were given to him in his youth and given to him to prepare him to be a servant of God, a citizen of heaven? His faith fades

away into indifference or into actual unbelief. He becomes a hard-headed man of the world. His chief pursuits are the acquisition of wealth and the enjoyment of the pleasures which wealth is able to procure. His object is to make life as easy as circumstances will permit. For him there is no prayer, no frequenting of sacraments, no visiting of the house of God. Practically he is a pagan whose centre is in himself, for he has forgotten God and the future life. He sneers at the teachings of the Church. He is content to enjoy this world, and provided that he can secure the good things that it offers, he is ready to risk that eternity in which he pretends not to believe. This is, in truth, a moral death. It lays hold of and extinguishes the spiritual life of even those who have been carefully and religiously nurtured; how much more surely and easily will it effect this in the case of those whose religious training has been neglected? Those who are witnesses of this moral death, and who have at heart the interests of those on whom it has laid its destroying hand, weep over and bitterly lament the calamity. The mother or the father, in secret, pours forth bitter tears, and in due season remonstrates, rebukes, exhorts. To these tears, to these prayers, Jesus is not indifferent. He knows and He seconds the efforts that are made to recall the wanderer to a sense of his peril, to awaken the deadened soul to some manifestation of life. By means of remorse He speaks to the young man; by the words of good books He endeavors to awaken conscience; by the death of friends to impart a shock that will startle into life. At last the work of Almighty Power is accomplished. Jesus meets him, as it were, face to face, and utters these thrilling words: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" He that was morally dead awakes, he obeys the command; he returns to the life of grace.

II. How is he that is thus awakened from his moral death sleep to fan into vigorous activity the spiritual life so graciously restored to him, to disentangle himself from the enfolding meshes of evil habits, to plant and tend the virtues which, by years of vicious courses, he has rooted out of his heart? He must look to Him whose voice has broken the spell of that death sleep. Jesus will enable him to burst asunder the bonds that held him fast; to fight down the fierce rage of passion; to cultivate the virtues that will merit heaven. For, what says our Lord to the newly-awakened soul? He says: "Come to me, you that have been laboring in the ways of sin; you that are heavily burdened with the accumulated weight

of guilt, and I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28). By this gracious invitation Jesus intimates that He will, as it were, remake the soul, "*Ego reficiam te.*" He furthermore tells us that He is "the resurrection and the life" (John xi. 25). The resurrection because He is the principle whence comes the power to rise; the life, because He is the principle enabling the risen soul to continue to live. Hence, the means offered to the young, enabling them after having risen from their moral death to live a moral life, is Christ Himself. He is the meat and the drink that feed and sustain moral life: "I am the bread of life" (John vi. 35). "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (John vi. 56). "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi. 54). Therefore, it is by the frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist that those who, responding to the voice of Christ, have risen from moral death, are enabled to live their moral life—the life of grace.

That life, as you all know, consists in purity of heart, in active faith, hope, and charity; consequently, the Holy Eucharist, being the bread that sustains that life, will nourish, will keep alive in the soul these virtues which give unmistakable evidence that it lives. In the first place, then, the Holy Eucharist preserves in the soul that spotless purity with which God clothed it when He called it to life from the grave of sin. For, as water extinguishes fire, the virtue of Christ's sacred body and blood extinguishes the raging flames of lust and the fierce heat of youthful blood, "lulling to sleep the law of the flesh abiding in the members" (St. Cyril. In Joan. vi. 57). Nay, it does more than appease the rage of that lust. It implants in the flesh a seed that germinates virginity, for, as the Prophet Zacharias says: "What is the good thing of him and what is his beautiful thing but the corn of the chosen ones and the wine which maketh virgins to spring forth?" (Chap. ix. 17). That corn and that wine produce this wonderful effect by ever keeping before the mind of him who reverently and devoutly partakes of them the memory of what Christ has done to give to it spiritual life. Our Lord knew full well this effect when He gave to His apostles and to their successors the command to do what He had done, to consecrate by the power imparted to them the body and the blood which He left to them, to be their chief treasure: "Do this for a commemoration of me. Do it to keep before your minds all that I have done for you" (Luke xxii. 19). Consequently the Eucharist pre-

serves in the mind of him who is battling with his fallen nature what Christ has done to enable him to maintain the conflict till victory shall have crowned his efforts with success. It makes him pass in review Christ's life of poverty; His patient endurance of persecution and contradiction; His agony of loathing and fear in Gethsemani; His cruel scourging in the hall of Pilate; His derisive crowning with thorns; His painful carrying of the cross; His crucifixion; His three hours of excruciating suffering, and His death. Can the memory of these things remain barren? Does it not stir up in the human heart noble, generous resolves to make some return to One who has been so lavish of His love? How can a young man indulge the animal instincts of his flesh when he looks upon the virginal flesh of Christ whipped and torn by the thongs and the dreadful Roman flagellum? Will he dare to indulge in unclean thoughts when he remembers the crown of thorns, every point of which inflicted on Our Lord exquisite suffering? Will he allow his eyes to rest upon unseemly objects, when he beholds his Master's eyes filled with blood? Can he stretch forth his hands to do deeds of shame, when he looks upon the hands that were pierced to atone for these actions, or can he continue to walk in the ways of iniquity when he contemplates the feet, wearied with journeyings after his lost soul, nailed to the hard wood of the cross? Will he permit his heart to desire evil, when he considers that the heart of Christ was cleft in twain by the soldier's spear? No; the memory of these things kept ever fresh by the frequent reception of the Eucharist is to him a perpetual exhortation not to indulgence of pleasure, but to the endurance of toil, to a life of self-restraint, of self-crucifixion. Thus, the Holy Sacrament, by preserving the memory of Christ's Passion, becomes for him a principle of resurrection and of spiritual life: "I am the resurrection and the life."

The Eucharist, as we know so well, does not impart that life; the soul must already be alive in order to partake of it; but it feeds, it sustains the soul's spiritual life, one of its first effects being to make that life manifest by those three great Christian virtues in which it is said to consist: First, the great fundamental virtue of faith is developed in the soul by the Holy Eucharist. How does the Eucharist effect this development? It effects it by that quickening and enlightening of the intellectual faculties resulting from the morality which it enables the soul to practise. Immorality, as we are taught by pagan and by Christian philosophers, dulls and blunts the edge of the intel-

ligence, whereas self-restraint and purity sharpens, makes keen all the intellectual powers. These powers then see and readily admit that, in the intercourse between an infinite God and His finite creatures, there must, of necessity, be many things which the human mind is unable to grasp. Admitting this inability, the mind is then ready to accept the facts of revelation without caring to comprehend their mode, which is beyond and above its powers. It bows down in humble adoration before these facts. It finds no difficulty in believing the greatest of them, the most impenetrable, that is to say, the Eucharist, which is called the mystery of faith. Nay, that mystery, by its very impenetrability, affords it the most ample scope for the practice of faith—a virtue, the exercise of which God exacts in order to have from us the homage of our intellect, just in the same way as, by obedience to the moral law, He claims from us the homage of our will. How vast, then, in the Eucharist, is the field for the exercise of faith! That glorious sacrament is, so to speak, an extension of the Incarnation; for by means of it the substance of the Incarnate Word is united with each of us and the sacrifice of Calvary is renewed, so that in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to God a clean oblation. In it the laws of nature are suspended, the whole substance of the bread and of the wine being changed into the body and the blood of Christ; the species of the bread and of the wine are sustained without the support of any underlying substance, and the body of Christ is present in many places at the same time. Thus does the Eucharist develop in the young man that has been recalled to moral life the fundamental virtue of faith.

Besides faith, it fills his soul with the divine virtue of hope—hope not only that it will have ministered to it all the aids necessary to win eternal beatitude, but that it will most certainly obtain those aids; for the Eucharist is God's pledge that the promised reward shall be bestowed. As for the helps given to surmount all opposing obstacles, consider, for a moment, the graces which it imparts to every one that worthily receives it from God's holy table. Think of the heavenly joy, far surpassing the pleasures of sense, infused by this bread of angels. Think of the strength flowing from it, of the courage inspired by it to do battle for the great King and stubbornly to resist His enemies. Above all, think of that germ of immortality which it plants in man's perishable flesh, a germ which is the principle of our own future resurrection to a life of glory, and

you can not but admit that the bread of eternal life and the cup of man's salvation inspire that blessed hope which upholds the Christian's flagging courage amid all the adversities and the allurements of this sinful world. That hope rests upon the infallible word of Christ: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi. 55).

In addition to faith, hope, and purity, the Eucharist develops in the soul the divine virtue of charity. How does it effect this? By most forcibly impressing upon men the fact that they are children of God and brethren in Christ Jesus. An abiding conviction of this kind is a most powerful factor in eliminating from their hearts that selfishness which impels them to seek their individual interests at the expense of those of others, and to invade their rights. By eliminating selfishness, it removes from the hearts of the wealthy and the powerful all arrogance, all will to oppress, all desire of fraud, all avaricious aims which are the root of so many evils in the individual man and the occasion of so many evils in the bosoms of the less fortunate. For, when men contemplate the charity of Christ manifested toward them, in this sacrament, in which He bestows upon them Himself, the magnitude of that gift incites them to love and to help one another. Even the outward, visible elements of the sacrament are to them a most forcible lesson of unity and brotherly love.

Our Lord calls His body "bread"—a substance kneaded together out of many grains. By thus naming it, He indicates that we, His people, are by it bound together in the closest possible union; and when He speaks of His blood as "wine," in which the juice pressed from many clusters of grapes is mingled in one fluid, He likewise indicates that His flock are by the commingling of a multitude of persons made one. St. Cyprian (*Ad Magnum. Epist.*: 96). Hence, the Council of Trent teaches that Christ left to His Church the Eucharistic Sacrament as a symbol of that union and charity by which He would have all His followers united . . . a symbol of that one body of which He is the head and to which He would have us, as members, attached by the closest bonds of faith, hope, and charity. Thus the Eucharist causes all those who persevere in the teaching of the apostles and in the breaking of that precious bread to be of one heart and of one soul. Hence we conclude that the Blessed Sacrament, in which Christ is truly, really, and substantially received, feeds and sustains in man that purity of morals,

that firm faith, that unshaken hope, that burning charity which are the manifestations of that spiritual life infused into those whom His merciful compassion has raised from the death of sin to the life of grace. To cast off all the trappings of the grave and to live that life is the message which Christ has for the young men of this age. He calls them to live that life; He gives them the means to live it: "Young man, I say to thee, Arise."

Have you heard that voice of Christ calling to you and bidding you awake to a new, a higher life? No doubt you have, for He speaks to all the souls that He has created. You may, perhaps, have passed years in the servitude of sin and of your passions. The unholy fire of these passions may have burned in your veins and consumed your spiritual life. The truths of faith then grew dim. Their light became so indistinct as to be well nigh indiscernible amid the fog of fleshly vapors enveloping you. You had no hope of a life of future blessedness. Your heart was full of bitterness toward your fellow men. It was hard as adamant. Verily, therefore, was the future dark indeed for you. God, however, did not forget you. He patiently waited for you. The time at last came when He met you face to face; His voice reached your ears; it bade you arise and no longer sleep the sleep of death. If you hear that voice, hearken to it. If Christ meets you, do not avoid Him. If He says to you: "Young man, I say to thee, Arise," upon the word obey; arise from the death of an impure life; resist manfully the evil impulses of your fallen nature; learn self-restraint by frequent acts of self-denial. Each attempt to do so and each success will give an increase of strength to your will. That will will gradually assert itself; it will throw off the trappings of death; it will cause you, first, to spring from the bier that is carrying you to hell; it will enable you to walk through the darkness enveloping you into the bright light of day; the heart of stone within you will become a heart of flesh; you will believe, you will hope, you will love. This will be the result of hearing and obeying the voice of Christ saying to you: "Arise!" For, besides giving you the order, He will give you the means to carry that order into effect. These means are His own most precious body and blood, which extinguish the fire of lust, which develop in the soul a living faith, a firm hope, an ardent charity—those three virtues which make manifest to the eyes of men that higher life to which He has raised you. Go frequently to His table and thence take that living bread, which will feed and sus-

tain that life, that bread which will plant in your mortal flesh a germ that will blossom into eternal life.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.

BY DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B.

“He saith to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.”—John xix. 27.

SYNOPSIS.—Mary faithful when all forsook Him. Her superhuman courage. She is Co-Redemptor. He does not forget her. Rewards the love of St. John by entrusting her to him. Sad exchange for Mary. Consolation and support to him. Mary in the house of John. Her mission in the infant Church. Two lessons to learn from her compassion. First, the blessedness of sharing in Christ's sufferings. Then the blessedness of complete conformity to the divine will.

It is one of the saddest features of the Passion that all those whom our Blessed Lord had chosen for His own, those upon whom He had poured out the richest treasures of His grace—all, without exception—at the first moment of real trial, at the first breath of danger, forsook Him and fled. We see amid the dark shade of the olives in the garden of Gethsemani a little band flying in every direction, without a thought of their Lord left thus alone like a lamb in the midst of wolves. Where is Peter the brave, the valiant, he who was but now so eager to lay down his life for his Lord? Where are the Sons of Thunder, James and John, so quick to resent the insult to their Divine Master? Where is Simon the Zealot; is his zeal quenched since he joined the company of Jesus? Where is Thomas, who said so bravely though so despondently, “Let us also go that we may die with him” (John xi. 16). Where is he now? Where are Andrew and Philip, who have seen such wondrous miracles of His power? Where is Nicodemus, the man without guile? Where are Jude and Matthew and James? “His disciples leaving him, all fled away” (Mark xiv. 50). The innocent Lamb of God is alone among this pack of cruel wolves.

Alone—yes, but for one!

Now it is Mary's time. Now she may go to Him. Now she may cleave to Him, none may send her away now, none may question now her right to be there—now it is His mother's turn—now that all

have forsaken Him, all His friends wherein He trusted, she may hasten to His side.

Yes, He is not disappointed in her. One heart He ever knew beat steadfast with His own, one form would follow Him from Annas to Caiphas, from Caiphas to the Council, from thence to Pilate, thence to Herod, back again to Pilate, all through the weary night; now there is no throng of eager listeners, of enthusiastic followers to keep His mother from Him. Now she is with Him all the time. So brave, too, that she may not add to His pain by breaking down. Poor, brave mother, who, while her heart is pierced with the sevenfold sword, will yet walk beside Him without fainting along the way of sorrows; will bear the agony of the last farewell, before the Victim is laid out upon the cross; will endure yet more, to see those dear hands which she has kissed so often, those dear hands which have so often been clasped round her neck as her Child laid His cheek against hers and whispered, "Mother, how I love you!" will endure to see those hands pierced with rude, blunt, cruel nails, those feet that were never weary in doing good, nailed through to the wood; to see that sacred Body, which she wrapped so tenderly in the swaddling bands, laid bare by the rough executioners to the rude gaze of the blaspheming mob; to see those garments which she spun with her own hands in the happy days at Nazareth, torn to pieces or gambled for by the heathen soldiers; will endure yet more, to stand hour by hour at the foot of the cross striving to catch the last whisper of His voice, bearing up so bravely for His sake, looking up so steadfastly into His dear face as she sees the death pallor steal over His brow and the eyes growing dim and glazed and the breath coming in great bursts, and as the darkness grows thick around the cross is mercifully spared from seeing more.

You, who have watched by the deathbed of your dearest ones, will know something of what our mother is bearing so bravely.

"Ah," cries a saint; "I see two altars upon Mount Calvary! One in the heart of Mary, one in the flesh of Christ. Christ is offering up His flesh, Mary is offering up her soul. For she desires indeed to add her own blood to the blood of her Son, and with the Lord Jesus to consummate the mystery of our redemption by the death of her body; but that is alone the privilege of our great High Priest, that with blood He should enter into the Holy of Holies."

Yes, the superhuman strength which inspires the mother to bear the intolerable anguish of her compassion, is the same desire which

consumes the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ—that Divine Thirst for our salvation.

She knew that He was giving Himself for us, and she would not hold Him back, rather she gives Him, her greatest treasure, her only joy, gives Him up gladly for the sins of the world, for the redemption of men.

And Jesus does not forget her. In all His agony, in the awful struggle with the hosts of Satan which He was then engaged in, in the midst of the overwhelming burden of the sins of the world laid then upon His shoulders, as upon the scape-goat of old—He can not forget her. Through all His agony His eyes rest with a look of love upon His mother. It is indeed the keenest pang of His Passion to see her suffer so, it adds tenfold more bitterness to His agony to know that every pang that racks His body pierces to the quick His mother's soul. Yet it is a comfort to Him that she is there, one to look upon in all that horrible crowd, one whom He can ever gaze upon with joy, one who has had no part in His crucifixion, who had not added one pang to His torture, one sin to His burden.

He gazes upon her, and upon that disciple whom He loves, John, who, though he fled in Gethsemani, has yet been emboldened by the sight of Mary's courage to creep in silent and overwhelming grief to the foot of his Master's cross.

He looks upon them both, and even in the extremity of His anguish, and thinks what He can do for them, and in His tender care consoles the one and rewards the other by a last legacy of love. He consoles His mother by giving her to John, and He gives to John the highest pledge of His undying love and His Divine forgiveness in entrusting him with this inestimable treasure, his one last gift, the care of her whom He loves most on earth.

He consoles her, for He knows that in John she will find a loving and a faithful son, knows that he will rejoice in caring for her, never be weary to hear her tell the sweet, tender stories of the wondrous birth and the happy home at Nazareth, and all the memories of that Divine Childhood. Consoles her, for He knows that none on earth can sympathize with her grief, can console her bereavement so fully and so devoutly as he upon whose breast he leant at that last supper in the upper room.

Yet, at the time, how great a grief it is to her! What a change! What a piercing grief, to be told to take another in place of her

own, to put another in place of Him whom she loves with the unique love of a mother and adores with the passionate devotion of a pure soul to its God—to the change from God eternal to mortal man, from the Master to the disciple, the King to the soldier, the Lord to the slave, the Son to the kinsman.

Truly the sword pierced thy heart, most blessed Mother! For all the cruelty that was inflicted on the bodies of the martyrs was light, or rather nothing, compared to thy passion, by its intensity transfixed and pierced to the innermost depths of thy most tender heart!

“ Who on Christ’s dear mother gazing,
Bowed with anguish so amazing,
Born of woman would not weep?
Who on Christ’s dear mother thinking,
Such a cup of sorrow drinking,
Would not share her sorrows deep?”

But to John it was, we may believe, a wondrous consolation, a most glorious privilege thus to be given the charge of the Blessed Mother of the Lord.

What an honor for His home to be blest by her presence! How tenderly he leads her home, after the dread tragedy is consummated, after Jesus has cried His last cry and breathed His last breath, and been taken down from the cruel cross and laid in the quiet tomb; how gently he leads the poor, weary, fainting mother home, how lovingly he ministers to her, how tenderly and reverently he cares for her.

And when after the forty days of the Resurrection are over, after Jesus has ascended into heaven in power and great glory, after all the glorious scenes of Easter and Ascensiontide and Pentecost, Mary still dwells on in the house of John.

Still dwells on in her bereavement, ever looking upward, ever waiting for the summons from her Son, still tarries awhile, for she has a work to do, to guide the infant Church with her counsel and her example, to hand down the beautiful story of the angel’s message, and the Visitation, and the Birth and Presentation in the Temple, her own Magnificat, old Simeon’s hymn and Zachary’s Benedictus, to record all this so that it may never be forgotten, so that St. Luke when he comes to write his Gospel may take down from her own lips all the wondrous history which she alone knows in its fulness.

Thus she tarries for a while, guiding and cheering and directing when it is necessary, but rather loving to remain hidden and alone,

alone with her Divine Son, alone to think of all that God has done for her soul, to wait in patience till Jesus calls her to her endless rest; to wait for the visit of the great archangel, who will come to warn her of her approaching death, and in all the life of Mary no moment is more joyous than that in which she yields her spirit into the hands of her Son and her God. We may not stay to think of this, or of her glorious entrance to heaven, and the meeting of the Son and the mother so long parted, when, amid the alleluias of the angelic hosts Mary falls at the feet of her Son and her God.

Rather let us think of her now standing beneath the cross of Jesus, bearing with wonderful courage and supernatural heroism her cruel martyrdom, sharing most perfectly in the Passion of Jesus, and then let us think of her dwelling in the house of John, bearing about in her body day by day the dying of the Lord Jesus, perfectly conformed to the likeness of His Passion.

And from the Mother of Sorrows let us learn two lessons to-day:

First, the blessedness of sharing in the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Mary was nearest to Jesus of any earthly being, and she partook most perfectly of His cup of suffering. And the nearer we grow to Jesus the more we shall meet with suffering and the more we shall learn to welcome it. We shrink from it naturally, but we have to learn to embrace it with a supernatural joy. If St. Paul says truly, we in our sufferings are allowed to fill up what is lacking of the sufferings of Jesus. These mysterious words would seem to mean that all suffering borne for the sake of Jesus, and in union with His Passion, has a wonderful value in the eyes of God.

Our little crosses then are united to His blessed cross, and are allowed by God's mercy to share in its virtue and its merits.

So let us resolve to cleave close to Jesus—like Mary, to be with Him all the time, not to wander away from the cross into paths of sin, not to join in crucifying Him by deliberate mortal sin, not to betray Him like Judas, not to deny Him like Peter, but rather with Blessed Mary to remain close beside Him, and if we can not look up into His face with the same steadfast, unwavering gaze as did the sinless Maiden of Nazareth, yet to bow our heads with John and bewail that we have ever allowed ourselves to forsake Him, bow our heads and strike our breasts, that He may be merciful to us and grant us nevermore to leave Him.

Or if we may not stand with John, at least we may kneel on the ground with the Magdalene and clasp the cross in our arms and let

our hot tears fall on the bleeding feet, those poor pierced feet which we ourselves have nailed to the wood. For it is in the cross of Jesus alone that we see the meaning and true power of sin!

And for our second lesson, let us take the words which are the motto of our blessed mother's life and strive to live by them as she did:

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word", (*Ecce ancilla Domini*).

That perfect acceptance of the will of God, that instant acquiescence in God's purposes for her—how we wonder at it. That was the secret of her whole life. The bitter and the sweet, the joy and the sorrow, all were gladly welcomed since they came from the hands of the God whom she loved.

In the strength of this union with the divine Will she was enabled both unhesitatingly to accept the extraordinary dignity and glory of her unique vocation, and courageously to bear a greater martyrdom than any soul has ever been called upon to endure.

Take her words then and make them your own; in all things that come to you, see the will of God, and cheerfully accept it. *Ecce ancilla Domini—Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum!*

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE GREATEST AND THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR DEVINE, PASSIONIST.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment."—Matt. xxii. 37, 38. St. Mark adds: "And with thy whole strength."—xii. 30.

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction.*—The circumstances of time, place, and persons considered in connection with the proclamation by our divine Saviour of the greatest and the first commandment. We have to reflect upon this commandment as taught by the words and example of Christ. To this end let us consider:

1. The meaning of charity or the love of God. Defined by St. Thomas. The most excellent of all the virtues. How the words "with thy whole heart, soul, mind, and strength" are to be understood.

2. The virtue or habit of charity. Its limitation and the extent of the obligation explained by four statements. (1) God is to be loved in His essence and in His will. (2) He is to be loved above all things in estimation or appreciation. (3) The love of God is not exclusive. (4) It need not be sensibly felt.

3. *Actual charity. Formal acts of charity to be made not only when persons arrive at the use of reason and at the hour of death, but frequently during life. The repetition of the acts increases the virtue in our souls. The virtue itself active and it ordains all the other virtues and their acts to their final end.*

Conclusion.—The motive of charity. The length and the breadth, the height and the depth of the charity of God for our souls.

A few days before His passion, when our Lord was teaching in the temple, the doctors of the law tempting Him, proposed several questions concerning faith and morals, and even questions of politics. The leaders of the Jews had decided to put Him to death, but they feared the people, and therefore they determined if possible to make Him odious to the people by endeavoring to represent Him as a false teacher. For this purpose the Herodians had questioned Him as to paying tribute to Caesar; the Sadducees proposed a difficulty about the doctrine of the resurrection, and now we find one of the Scribes from among the Pharisees asking a question as to the first precept of the law. It was a question on which two of the leading schools of the Jews of that day were disagreed, and the lawyer put the question to our Lord hoping that He would commit Himself to some error in His reply, so as to be treated as an enemy of the traditions revered by the people.

Our Lord answered in the words of the text: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," etc. It is the same commandment and given in the same words as that which we read in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and it is the compendium of all the commandments written on the first table of the Law. The love of our neighbor, which Christ immediately added, is the compendium of those on the second table. It is the greatest and the first commandment of the divine law. That which is impressed naturally on the soul of every human being, which was placed first on the Decalogue, and which is here solemnly announced by our Divine Saviour. You are invited to consider this great commandment by the Gospel read in the Mass of to-day, and to consider it not according to Jewish interpretations and traditions, but as it has been taught and explained by the example and doctrine of Christ, handed down to us by the traditions and the laws of Christian faith and morality. Let us then consider:

1. The true meaning of charity or the love of God.
2. The virtue or habit of charity.
3. The acts of charity as elicited or commanded by the virtue.

1. *The meaning of charity or the love of God.*

Charity is a supernatural and infused virtue which enables us to love God above all things. St. Thomas in treating of charity proves that it is a virtue, because it reaches unto God and unites us to Him according to the saying of St. Augustine: "Charity is a virtue which, when our affection is right, unites us to God and enables us to love Him."

It is not only a virtue but it is the most excellent of all virtues according to the words of St. Paul: "And now there remain faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greater of these is charity" (I. Cor. xiii. 13). It is as St. Thomas teaches the form of the virtues, since by it the acts of all other virtues are directed to this ultimate end. This teaching is founded on those texts of Sacred Scripture which declare that without charity the other virtues are dead, and can not profit us to eternal life. The other virtues are of themselves so imperfect that unless informed by charity they do not render a man really virtuous, but charity is in itself so perfect that it renders a man in the true spiritual sense really good, and it subordinates the other virtues to itself, and directs them to its own end, which is God and God alone. Cardinal Bona thus writes concerning charity: "Holiness consists in purity of every description, and in an immovable union with God, which is perfected by the closest bond of love. When the soul, being purged from all the rust of earthly affections, and elevated above all things, has reached the perfection of justice, then it may truly say with the apostle: 'Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? . . . For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. viii. 35-39). Fasting, alms, the chastisement of the flesh and other exercises of the same kind, avail much toward obtaining holiness, but without charity they do not profit us to salvation. Although we may distribute all our goods to the poor and deliver our bodies to be burned and have not charity, according to the same apostle, it profiteth us nothing."

This is the virtue which is commanded by the greatest and the first precept of the law, and the extent of its obligation may be understood from the words: "With thy whole heart, and with thy

whole soul, with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength." Some attach a distinct meaning to each of these words, but we need not be too anxious to know and remember their distinction. It is sufficient to know that by the word heart is here meant the affections and the soul, and that the intellect or understanding is designated by the mind, and that, therefore, in explaining the text of the commandment we may understand "with thy whole heart, soul, and mind" as an energetic repetition, which, in different words, inculcates the same duty; namely, to love God as much as possible above all things and in all things. God is worthy of all the love we can give, and we can never love Him to excess and as He deserves to be loved. The measure of the love of God is, therefore, to love Him without measure.

According to St. Paul, charity or love is the fulfilling of the law. St. Francis de Sales well explains how this is the case. He says: "The perfection of charity is so far elevated above that of the other virtues that, though it communicates itself to them all, it can not receive any additional value from them, not even from obedience, in which all the other virtues participate most abundantly. For though we obey in loving God, yet our love does not derive its perfection from obedience, but from its sovereign and eternal object; if it is the most excellent of all virtues, it is not because we obey in practising it, but because its motive is the most excellent of all perfections, being divine. In observing the commandment of love, we certainly obey, and we prove our love by obeying; but the perfection of obedience is not derived from the docility which animates our love, but from the love which inflames our obedience. Hence we may conclude, that as God is the principle and the term of all that is good, so charity, which is the source and origin of all holy affections, is likewise their end and perfection" (Treatise on "The Love of God," Bk. xi. Ch. ix.).

Charity thus explained may be considered as a habit or virtue, or as an act, and it is to these two aspects of charity that your attention is now invited.

2. Habitual charity or charity considered as a virtue or habit of the soul.

With regard to the habit of charity we may ask how is the precept to be understood, or what is the obligation which it imposes? To this we may reply by the following statements, which contain the explanation needed for the direction of souls:

1. By the precept of charity we are not, as already stated, obliged to that supreme degree of love which is beyond the capacity of created beings, namely to love God as much as He is worthy of love or as much as He deserves to be loved. That infinite love belongs to the persons of the Most Holy Trinity, and it is not possible to creatures even in heaven, where the angels and saints enjoy the most perfect union with God.

2. Neither are we commanded to be always actually intent upon the love of God by a continual effort of affection, without any distraction or interruption, because a love of this kind is granted only to the Blessed in heaven.

3. Neither does the precept imply that we are to be free from temptations, and from all rebellion on the part of our sensitive and inferior appetites or faculties against the law of God. This is not always in the power of mortal man or wayfarers in this world.

4. The precept means this, namely, that according to the condition of our state here on earth, we are to love the Lord our God for His own sake, above all things, so that we esteem nothing so much as God, that we refer all our actions to His great honor and glory, and that we be ready to suffer and endure everything rather than admit anything into our lives contrary to the love and the will of God; that is, that we preserve our souls in a state of sanctifying grace, and guard them against the stain of any sin that would banish that grace and render us the enemies of God—expose us to His wrath. From these statements we can conclude and proclaim some familiar truth which can not be too often repeated, nor too well impressed upon our mind. The Lord our God is to be loved (1) in His essence and in His will; (2) He is to be loved by choice and, in appreciation at least, above all things; (3) the love of God is not exclusive, but it is the chief and the principal love of our hearts; (4) it need not be sensibly felt, but it should be efficacious. God is to be loved in His essence, because in Himself He is most lovable, containing, as He does, all goodness, infinite wisdom, and infinite beauty, of which we have only the representation and shadow in the goodness, wisdom, and beauty of His creatures. God is to be loved in His will, or in His law because it is the best and most perfect and ordains all that is good and holy for our welfare and happiness. God is to be loved above all things; that is, above all creatures or created goods, such as fortune, honors, riches, parents, friends, yea, even more than life itself. This is what is meant when

we say that the love of God must be supreme at least by choice and in appreciation. The mind and heart are to esteem the goodness of God and His will above everything else, and His divine will is to be preferred to all that is contrary thereto or prohibited by His law. When it is said again that the love of God is not exclusive we are to understand that it does not shut out every other love, for we are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. It is, however, exclusive in one sense, namely, that it excludes the love that is contrary to it, that is, sinful love, and in all other affections it is required that the love of God be supreme, that it be the first love of the heart, and that all other love be subordinate to it.

Although the love of God may sometimes overflow and gain access to our feelings, it is not at all necessary that it does this, or that it be sensibly felt, because it resides in the superior part of the soul, namely, in the will. It must, however, be efficacious, that is, not a mere wishing or a complacency, but a true and sincere love which determines the will to accept all the commandments of God and to observe them with fidelity and to conform itself in all things to the Divine will.

3. *Actual charity.*

We have now to consider charity as to its acts in order to bring home to our minds the full force and extent of the law of charity.

Actual charity, or an act of the love of God, is necessary as a means of salvation for all adults who have come to the use of reason. St. John says: "And every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is charity" (I. John iv. 7). This act of charity should be supernatural, so as to proceed from grace; it must have as its object God, as He is the author of our being and our final end; and its motive must be the goodness of God as known by faith or in the supernatural order.

The act of charity is not only necessary as a means of salvation, it is also necessary by reason of the Divine precept. The precept to love God above all things is special, both in respect to the internal love of the heart and the external effect of that love, namely, the keeping of the commandments. This precept of making an explicit act of charity obliges all, according to the common teaching of theologians, as soon as they come to the use of reason, at the hour of death, and often during life. It also obliges as often as we are bound to recover the grace of God, and to repent of our sins, that

is, in cases when a perfect act of contrition is required for the recovery of God's grace. In such an act there is included an act of charity. It may also be necessary to make such an act in order to overcome some grave temptation, and implicitly the act of charity may be often included in other acts of prayer and devotion.

Let us not, however, limit these acts to any particular time or circumstance, but rather let us make them as frequently as possible, and let us do this especially for the purpose of increasing the charity of God in our souls and increasing our beatitude in heaven. Charity has to be increased by its own acts, and it belongs to charity to raise up the acts of all the other virtues and to make them her own. When we say that a man is sometimes bound to elicit an act of theological charity, we have to think of the motive of such an act. A true act of charity is such that our whole being and all our works are referred to God, loved for His own sake. The precept of charity is that we love God with our whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and this means that all things be referred to Him; and, therefore, a man can not fulfil this precept without referring all to God. This ordination of all our acts to God, loved for His own sake, which has to be sometimes repeated, remains as long as it is not formally or implicitly revoked, and if revoked it ought to be renewed by a fresh act of charity. Therefore, let us reflect that though the acts of the other virtues in order to be meritorious of eternal life need not be commanded by charity. At the same time the habit of charity can not be inactive, and it can not abide long in a man before it passes into acts and refers all other acts to its own proper object and end; namely, to God, our first beginning and our final end.

Conclusion.—The motive of the love of God.

"In this is charity," says St. John, "not as though we had loved God, but because he hath first loved us" (I. John iv. 10). The one motive to incline our hearts more and more to the love of God is or ought to be His great love for us, which we may unite with the primary motive of charity; namely, God's own goodness and excellence. The love of God for us may be regarded at the same time as the motive and as the pattern of our love for Him. St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says: "That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts: that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth" (Eph. iii. 17, 18). These words reveal to us the four properties of Divine charity. The length,

which may be said to be its eternal duration. The charity of God is eternal—without beginning. “I have loved thee,” He says, “with an eternal love.” It will last forever unless we sever ourselves from it and render ourselves unworthy of it by the guilt of sin. The breadth as applied to charity signifies the extent of Divine love, as it embraces all men and wills their salvation, and although that Divine charity extends to all, it is not on this account anything the less for each one. The height of Divine charity appears in two things, namely, in God elevating men to the dignity of His children and to be heirs of His kingdom. And in order to effect this by the incarnation of His divine Son He raised up human nature to union with the God-head that in our own nature He might suffer and die for us and purchase our salvation by the shedding of His own most precious blood. “God so loved the world as to send his only begotten Son” (John iii. 16). The height of this Divine charity is also revealed to us in the Holy Eucharist, in which Christ still abides with us and gives Himself to us as the food and nourishment of our souls. The depth of the love of God appears in the humiliations to which our Saviour submitted for our sakes during His Passion: “He emptied himself; he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross” (Phil. ii. 7, 8). The profundity of Divine charity may also be understood from the manner in which God purifies the souls whom He especially loves, namely, by much suffering, by many tribulations, by crosses and humiliations, that they may be conformed to the image of His own Divine Son, thus showing to us the truth of the words of His apostle: “To them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as according to his purpose are called to be saints” (Rom. viii. 28).

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

DOING ALL THINGS WELL.

BY THE REV. W. GRAHAM.

“And the multitudes, seeing it . . . glorified God.”—Matt. ix. 8.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—(1) The impression made by Christ on His own generation. Multitude canonize Christ in declaring that “He hath done all things well.” (2) Herein lies golden rule of conduct for those who seriously wish to lead holy lives. (3) Solomon sends sluggard to ant and bee, and Christ, His followers, to the very children of darkness, to learn this lesson. (4) To be carried out in our daily lives.

I. By conformity in all things to divine will. (1) God’s will expressed in law—universal standard of right. (2) May be known and distinguished by all. (3) God wishes our sanctification—to be effected in and through duty, i. e., obedience to divine will.

II. By singleness of purpose. (1) Worthy motives the basis of good conduct. (2) Purpose determines morality of actions. Human life ennobled or debased thereby.

III. Of all worthy motives of conduct (1) love of God best and highest. (2) Must influence all souls striving for the higher and better life.

One of the principal purposes of our Lord’s mission among men was to give to mankind the example of a perfect character, and the impression which He made on the people of His own generation by His words and works is of the greatest interest to us. We see in to-day’s Gospel the deep impression of admiration and reverence which He aroused among the people. And, on another occasion, the popular judgment concerning Him was summed up in the saying, “He hath done all things well” (Mark vii. 37).

What higher panegyrics could be preached on the life and work of our divine Lord than that contained in these simple words, “He hath done all things well” (Mark vii. 37)? Herein lies a maxim that should guide and regulate our own conduct. Indeed, this golden rule embodies the secret of success in every sphere and walk of life. He who would be perfect in any art, profession, or branch of knowledge must be painstaking, in other words, must strive to do everything relating thereto well. Indeed, the divine gift of genius is described by someone as simply an “infinite capacity for taking pains.” The same holds true in the science of the saints—the great art of living and dying well; the great life-work of serving God and sav-

ing our immortal souls. All that bears on this task—the only one in life absolutely necessary—we must strive to do well. Solomon sends the sluggard to the ant and the bee, there to learn lessons of wisdom and foresight; and one greater and wiser than Solomon, our Lord Himself, sends His careless and slothful followers even to the unjust steward and “the children of this world, wiser in their generation than the children of light” (Luke xvi. 8), to learn the same lessons in a higher and spiritual sense. For all these, by their determined efforts to grow rich, to build up at all costs fame and fortune, reproach us for our sluggishness and afford us many an object lesson as to how diligently, earnestly, and perseveringly we should work, not for the life that perishes, nor for the treasure that rusts, and which moth may consume and men take from us, but to build up an eternal dwelling, to gather in the treasure of a good and peaceful conscience here and the immortal crown and undying rewards that follow hereafter. In order to compass this end—in other words, “to do all things well,” in the Gospel sense of the term, certain essential conditions must be complied with—must underlie our daily conduct and give it, so to say, spiritual life and meaning. Let us briefly touch on the three most important of these, which are:

- I. Conformity to God’s holy will.
- II. Singleness of purpose.
- III. Love of God as chief and leading motive of conduct.

I. A work to be well done must be modeled after the best of its kind. Everything has its rule or standard, and ideal perfection consists in bringing it as near this standard as possible. Now the measure and rule and standard of holy living, of Christian perfection, is rigid conformity to God’s holy will, known and recognized as such. The divine will that finds expression in the divine law is the rule of conduct. Aught that deflects from this law is wrong, sinful, morally deformed. Even when compliance with it involves pain, loss, suffering, or sacrifice of any kind we must be ever ready to say with our divine Master in the bitter anguish of His Passion, “Not my will, but thine be done” (Luke xxii. 42). To “do all things well,” therefore, we must always prove, i. e., try to do “what is the good and the acceptable and the perfect will of God” (Rom. xii. 2).

Nor can we plead ignorance of what is God’s will in our regard. For all practical purposes it is as plain as the sun in the sky. We

need no angel from heaven to tell it to us. "We have Moses and the prophets" and their legitimate, divinely appointed Church and her rulers, "taught of God," with the ever-abiding presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, more trustworthy than a spirit returned from the other world, to teach us our Creator's will, and, what is more, furnish us with grace and strength to carry it out.

God wishes us to be holy. "This is the will of God—your sanctification," says St. Paul (I. Thess. iv. 3). And how is this sanctification or making ourselves holy to be effected? Simply by obedience to His known wishes and orders expressed in the Decalogue or ten commandments. Applied to the various phases of daily life, they sum up and form what is called *duty*. Therefore, when and where the call of duty arises, there is the clear will of God in our regard. We do not need to seek for it or wait for it, as it is ever present. Each state of life and each day of life brings its round of duties. "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do," says Holy Scripture, "do it earnestly" (Eccles. ix. 10). And even though, as I observed, this path of conformity to God's holy will, this *via sacra* of duty, may entail self-sacrifice, suffering, and sorrow, still we must be resigned "to take up our cross daily and follow" (Matt. xvi. 24) our divine Master. God may neither will nor approve of the conduct of those who unjustly impose the cross; but He certainly does will that we should bear it patiently. It is His way of purifying, chastening, and strengthening, in short, of sanctifying us. With the Psalmist, we should say, "Although he should kill me, I will trust in him" (Job xiii. 15).

II. The second necessary condition for doing all things well is to act with great singleness of purpose—purity of intention in all that we do. In St. Paul's words, "Not serving to the eye as it were pleasing to men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6: 7). Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God (I. Cor. 10: 31). "The light of thy body is thy eye, if thy eye be single thy whole body shall be lightsome, but if thy eye be evil thy whole body shall be darksome" (Matt. vi. 22, 23). By the eye is meant the intention or motive, which morally speaking determines the entire value of one's actions. Deeds in themselves, good or indifferent, may by unworthy motives—wicked intentions—be rendered base and blameworthy. Relieving the poor is intrinsically a good act, yet if done with a bad purpose in view it becomes vitiated at the root and shares before God in the baseness of the motive that gave rise to it. Good

conduct—holy living is mainly so because based on worthy motives. Purity of intention is then the very mainspring of a good life. The Scripture tells us that when God saw all the things He had made, He pronounced them good; but did not so express Himself in regard to man, inasmuch as man, by the good or bad use of his free-will, by freely determining to act on either good or bad motives, possesses the awful power of making himself either a good man or a bad man, a saint or sinner, an angel or a demon. He can do all things in life well or ill according as he is swayed by good or bad motives.

III. No doubt all conduct based on good and worthy motives is praiseworthy, and indirectly, at least, refers and goes to God, the source and fountainhead of all goodness; but more is expected from those who like ourselves know so much about God and His claims to our service. We must approach Him directly and expressly—draw near to Him in the bonds of love. Hence the third essential condition of “doing all things well” in the Gospel sense of the term is to make charity or the love of God the leading, the master motive of our actions. Without some degree of this, nothing, supernaturally speaking, can be said to be well done. All else is unavailable. For “if I should have all faith,” says St Paul, “so that I could remove mountains, and if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (I. Cor. xiii. 2, 3). For love is the master-passion of the heart—the very mainspring of its movements, and, according to its object determines one’s character. Now God is the Supreme Being—the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth—our Father in a far higher and more absolute sense than any earthly parent. He requires the first place in our hearts. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart” (Matt. xxii. 37). It is akin to sacrilege to make the love of Him inferior or dependent on any other. Howsoever tenderly then we may love creatures, they must all rank in the heart under God. Parent, wife, and child must come after God, and, if needful, give way to Him—must not hinder us from loving Him or, worse still, be made an occasion of offending Him—they must be loved in order, i. e., in, through, and for God (Matt. x. 37). “He that loveth father and mother more than me,” says our divine Lord, “is not worthy of me.” If then we would live as perfect Christians and do all things well, the love of God must be the paramount motive of our conduct. It must permeate our whole moral

being. "Let all your things be done in charity," i. e., in love, says St. Paul (I. Cor. xvi. 14). "He that loveth not, abideth in death" (I. John iii. 14). Thus to make the love of our Creator the leading motive of our conduct is the shortest and easiest road to the perfection of life to which we are called. For love makes every task easy and every burden light. We know the common observation that a man finds a duty hard, not because of its intrinsic difficulty, but simply because his heart is "not in it." For "love," as Holy Scripture says, "is strong as death." . . . "Many waters can not quench charity nor the floods drown it. If a man should give all the substance of his house for love he shall despise it as nothing" (Cant. viii. 6, 7).

These, dear brethren, are the chief essential conditions required for a soul in the state of grace to "do all things," to fulfil all justice as the Gospel puts it. Bear in mind that we are all called to holiness of life. The higher life is not, as some people imagine, beyond the reach of ordinary Christians—reserved only for the chosen few. All of us, without exception, in proportion to our lights and capacities, all are called to be saints. The words "Be you therefore perfect as also your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48) were not addressed merely to a few cloistered monks and nuns, but to His followers in general. Now to act upon this exhortation—to reach the standard of holiness to which we are called, no safer, easier, or more practical rule than that of doing all the ordinary duties of life well, acting well our daily and hourly tasks, ever seeking "the kingdom of God" (Luke xvii. 21), which our divine Master says is "within you"; by doing all things in conformity to His holy will, with great singleness of purpose and the love of Him as our leading motive—thus shall we, in imitation of our Master, "do all things well"—lay up in heaven the treasure that never fails and win the crown alone worthy of human striving.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE EXTERIOR DARKNESS.

BY THE VERY REV. F. C. DOYLE, O.S.B.

“Bind his hands and his feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”—Matt. xxii. 13.

SYNOPSIS.—The parable represents the Eternal Father calling to the Church of Christ the Jews, who refused to accept the invitation, and the Gentiles, who obeyed His call. The man who came to the marriage feast without being clothed in a wedding garment is a figure of those who accept the doctrine without practising the morality of Christ. They are cast into “the exterior darkness.”

The subject of the discourse is an explanation of what is meant by these words, “the exterior darkness.”

I. A state in which it is impossible to do anything to extricate one's self from it. “Bind fast his hands and his feet.” A state in which man is deprived of all good and of the company of Him who called him to the marriage feast. “Cast him forth.”

II. A state in which he is overwhelmed with every ill. He is in “a place of torments;” “a treasury of the wrath of God;” “a lake of fire and brimstone.” Fire to imprison; fire to punish the faculties of the soul and the senses of the body. Fire to punish and to imprison for all eternity.

Conclusion.—A doctrine against which men raise a great outcry. They endeavor to prove that hell does not exist. Accept the words of Christ and of His Church. Let His doctrine on this point be to you a light-house warning you from the abyss. It will enable you to direct the bark of your soul into the haven of rest.

The parable which is read in the Gospel for this Sunday is not a difficult one to understand. The king who made a marriage feast for his son is the Eternal Father, inviting all men to enter that Church in which is salvation. The messengers sent forth to invite the guests, are the prophets of old time, Christ the Messiah, the God-Man, and His apostles. They delivered their summons first to the Jews, who refused to accept it; next to the Gentiles, who crowded in to the feast prepared for them. But among the guests there was one who, on entering, had refused the wedding garment usually presented to each as he came to the door. What class of men does he prefigure? That class who, though belonging to the faith preached by Christ, do not practise the morality taught by Him, and who persist in their perversity, refusing to give up the servitude of their passions. The fate of such as these is clearly set before us. They

are cast out into "the exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xxii. 13). "The exterior darkness!" What is it? This question I will endeavor to answer in the few words that I shall address to you this morning.

1. "The exterior darkness" is evidently a place, or a condition, or a state of being, in which it is impossible for the man that is cast into it ever to do anything by which he will be able to effect his escape: "Bind fast his hands and his feet." In other words, it is hell. A moment's reflection will show you that for us men there are two states of existence, the one in time, the other in eternity. Our existence, or life in time, is a preparation for our existence in eternity. During the brief span of our life we are educated, trained, prepared for eternity; when eternity dawns upon us, that work of training and education for eternity must be finished. Our Lord himself points out to us this truth when He tells us to work while we have the light, "for the night cometh when no man can work" (John ix. 4). Our present life, then, is the time of light, during which we may train and educate ourselves for eternity, because it is a period of trial, and consequently a period of merit; whereas eternity is the state of reward for the trial that has been faithfully endured, or of punishment for culpable failure in it. Life is a period of merit, because we can not at present clearly see all the reasons that we have for bearing the yoke and for humbly observing the law of God. Therefore, we have liberty of choosing either good or evil, of doing either good or evil, and consequently of meriting. But in the next life when God openly presents Himself before us, and the surpassing greatness of the reward of heavenly bliss is revealed to us, our liberty of choosing is taken away. We must, perforce, accept our end, but then there is no merit in so doing. We are, consequently, fixed in a state in which there can be no change. In the words of Christ, the wretched sinner who has departed this life in the state of deadly sin is "bound hand and foot." The light of life's brief day has gone out; the night has rushed down upon and enveloped him in its darkness, in which it is impossible for him to work.

2. Besides the impossibility of doing any thing that might loose him from the bonds that bind him fast, the wretched being who is in this pitiable plight is deprived of all good. We gather this from the words of the king who came in to see the guests and ordered the daring intruder to be bound hand and foot. The command given to his ministers of justice is: "Cast him forth." This casting forth

is a deprivation of all that he then enjoyed—the presence or company of his fellow-guests, the good things of the royal feast, the light and the beauty of the banqueting hall, the presence and the favor of the king who had so graciously admitted him to a participation of all these favors. So is it also with the unrepenting sinner who is cast into hell. A moment before the sentence of his condemnation is uttered, he is in possession of many good things, both of the natural and of the supernatural order. He has friends who love him and whom he loves; the family circle of which he is the jewel; influence which his learning or his wealth has procured; power intrusted to him by men who know how to estimate his worth; a luxurious home, a fair estate, costly raiment, troops of obsequious servants, and all the other adjuncts of well-to-do worldlings who fare sumptuously every day. In the twinkling of an eye all these have vanished; he has stood before the great Judge; he has been weighed in the balance; he has been found wanting, and has been sent to his own place. There is nothing left to him but the memory of what he has enjoyed and in the enjoyment of which he has forgotten God.

These, however, are not the only good things of which he has been deprived. There are other and more precious goods, once in his power, but now forever beyond his reach. These were the spiritual good things which God so lavishly showered upon him. During the brief day of his life, God oftentimes inspired him with holy thoughts; filled him with good desires; moved him to reformation of the mis-spent years; instructed him by the words of Holy Writ and by the voice of the ever-living Church; strengthened him by the sacraments; and in a thousand other ways enriched him with priceless gifts from the treasury of His mercy and grace. In that “outer darkness” into which at death the unrepentant sinner is cast, there are none of these spiritual good things. There are no profitable thoughts, no meritorious desires, no wishes to repent, but only regrets for lost opportunities. Of all these he has been deprived.

The loss of them is a great evil; but it is not the worst. That worst evil is the fact of being separated from the king who called him to beatitude, to the marriage feast of his son. He is deprived of God, for the possession of whom he was created. He is, consequently, wrenched from his centre in which are repose and happiness. He is as a disjointed limb in the human body. Therefore, he can not rest; he can not find repose; he is in a state of violence and of unutterable pain. In this world separation from God is not felt,

or, if felt, it is only in a dull, feeble sort of way, the pain of which is speedily soothed by the earthly good things absorbing the attention and captivating the love of the soul. But in the life to come, when all that here distracted the mind and blinded it to the beauty of God has utterly vanished like the baseless fabric of a vision, God will stand before the soul as its true centre, in all the dazzling beauty and attractiveness that ravish with delight the souls of the just. Then that lost, that reprobate being will rush with all the energy and the impetuosity of a disembodied spirit to the embrace of God, who will hurl it from His presence. God's rejection of it will fill it with rage and despair. It will see that it has lost Him; that it has lost Him through its own fault; that it has lost Him forever.

Thus, "the outer darkness" means for the lost soul inability to do aught that might remedy its irremediable ills, and deprivation of all good, chief among which is God, its centre, its last end: "Bind fast his hands and his feet, and cast him forth" (Matt. xxii. 13).

This is but the negative side of his unhappy state—the privation of what is good. There is besides this, a positive one—the infliction of every evil. The unhappy wretch, after being bound hand and foot and cast forth, is thrust into the exterior darkness, in which there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. These last mentioned ingredients of his cup of woe are the effects, the indications of something that befalls him in his dread prisonhouse. What is that? It is punishment, the punishment of every faculty and of every sense by which he has offended God and trampled under foot the precious blood of Christ. The soul is punished, and after the resurrection, when once more the soul is united with the body, the body also will receive its share of chastisement for its complicity, with the soul, in evil. Truly, then, do we say that in the "exterior darkness," or in hell, the lost soul, the lost man will experience the torturing smart of every kind of evil. Does this seem to you an exaggeration? Turn, then, to the words of truth, and learn what it says on this subject. Our Lord calls hell "a place of torments" (Luke xvi. 28), "a gehenna of fire" (Matt. v. 22). In what words does St. Paul speak of it? He terms it "the treasury of the wrath of God" (Rom. ii. 5). Even the apostle of love, the mild and gentle St. John, writes of it as "the lake of fire and brimstone." If you still entertain any doubt, if you still are incredulous, listen to the words in which Christ tells us of the great judgment when God shall come in power and majesty to render unto every man according to his works. The sentence

which that Judge shall pronounce upon the wicked is couched in these terrible words: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). Everlasting fire! This is the agent chosen by God to punish the first-born of His creation that rebelled against Him; it is also the agent destined by Him to punish those of His earthly children who, yielding to the seductions of these fallen spirits, join in their revolt and range themselves under the standard of Lucifer, their chief. That agent, fire, enwraps them in its fierce embrace and becomes their prison, preventing them from acting where and when they will. It is not only their prison, but their torturer. Unlike the fire of this world, which tortures and consumes the body, this fire can touch and torture the disembodied spirit as well as the earthly tabernacle informed by it. But while torturing that sensitive flesh, it will never be able to consume it. It will serve rather as a preservative to keep it in being, as salt to embalm it. Hence that vigorous expression of our Lord, who, after saying that in hell the worm of conscience shall never die and that the torturing fire shall never be extinguished, adds: "For everyone shall be salted with fire" (Mark ix. 48). Are we not, then, right in saying that in "the exterior darkness" the reprobate soul is overwhelmed with every evil?

This is a fearful thought; but far worse is the thought that to these torments both of soul and of body, there will never be an end. Many have tried to flatter themselves that after a period of ages these fires will slacken and cease to torture. They say that they can easily conceive that there should be a fire that shall last forever, but not one that will torture forever. The words of our Lord will not permit us to indulge in this futile hope; for He says that the reprobate shall go, not only into everlasting fire, but into everlasting punishment. Like these men, we also might admit that there is an everlasting fire, but we can not admit that there is an everlasting punishment unless there are objects upon which that everlasting punishment shall be exercised. Consequently, it is said of these wretched beings "that they shall desire death, annihilation, but that death shall flee from them; that they shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction; that they shall be tortured day and night forever and ever" (Apoc. ix. 6; II. Thes. i. 9; Apoc. xx. 10).

Consequently, we have said that "the exterior darkness" implies the impossibility of escape from that dread prisonhouse of hell—the privation of every good; the endurance of every evil: "Bind fast his

feet and his hands, and cast him forth into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xxii. 13). Against this terrible doctrine, men raise a great outcry. They say it is incompatible with the infinite mercy of God; that the punishment which it teaches shall be meted out to the wicked for their sins, is out of proportion with the offense, and therefore unjust; that hell is an invention of priests and of tyrants who through its terrors endeavor to bring men into subjection to them; in fine, that there is no such place of torment, for the existence of it would contradict their notions of the infinite goodness of God.

Have those who speak thus ever seriously reflected upon what they say? Are not their words the outcome of temper, or of a life threatened with hell, rather than the conclusions of a mind that has calmly reasoned out the matter? Is their ideal of God's mercy a higher one than that of the saints, of the fathers of the Church, of the apostles and the martyrs who sacrificed their lives rather than fall into it. "Hell does not exist!" But Christ says that it does; He is God; He is the truth itself. Who will dare to contradict Him? He says not only that it exists, but that obdurate sinners shall be thrust into it. True, the mercy of God is infinite; it is infinite in itself, but not in its application to man; otherwise God's justice could not be exercised upon the wicked who would ultimately share in the bliss of heaven equally with the just. Therefore, let not passion, nor the sophisms of men who have every reason to repudiate this doctrine, blind you to its truth. If hell exists, and we have the word of Christ, the teaching of His apostles and of the Church founded by Him and by them to vouch for its existence, it is but folly to close our eyes to the fact. It is to act as we are told that the ostrich acts when closely pursued by the hunter; it thrusts its foolish head into the sand of the desert, deeming itself in perfect safety, meanwhile leaving its body exposed to his deadly bullet. Rather let us look the truth squarely in the face and honestly accept it. We are launched upon the ocean of life and its waves are bearing us onward toward the shores of eternity. On the right is the haven of rest; on the left is that dismal land, that outer darkness. The helm is in our hands; we can direct our bark to whichever place we please. The doctrine of hell stands up out of the waste of waters like a lighthouse casting its brilliant light upon the troubled waves and warning us of the utter ruin awaiting us should we turn our prow toward that against which it warns us. Let us believe; let us make

use of the light of hell and we shall reach the haven of rest; we shall escape the "exterior darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth."

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

REALIZATION OF THINGS SPIRITUAL.

BY THE RT. REV. MGR. CANON VAUGHAN.

"See . . . now you walk circumspectly, . . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil."—Eph. v. 15, 16.

SYNOPSIS.—*Evil in the world; since the fall; now as always. Why? Lack of thought. Lack of faith. Importance of faith. Invisible moving power of our actions. Reason works on principles supplied by faith. Suicide considered according to diverse principles. The motives of faith as a safeguard against sin. Without these motives, there is no sanction for morality. Languid faith among believers. Realizing our beliefs—how advertisers recognize the need of this. Necessity of this vivid realization in things spiritual. Most people realize temporal things much more vividly. Example of laborer missing mass; example of society woman. Gain this strong faith by prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, and by exercising our faith.*

"The days are evil"—the days of this life, the days of man's earthly pilgrimage are filled with evil. This is no new discovery. From the time that Adam violated the command of God, to the present day, evil has stalked, like some malign influence, over the once fair face of this world. More than four thousand years ago Moses declared in inspired words that "all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth" (Gen. vi. 12). St. John the Evangelist in his day made a similar statement, viz., "the whole world is seated in wickedness" (I. John v. 19). St. Augustine in the fifth century referred to the world as "a mass of damnation," and such, with little variation, has been the language of holy and enlightened men in all ages ever since. Indeed, the same evil reputation rests upon the world even at the present day.

The passing century—"the day" of our present life—is no exception. There is not a command of God that is not broken, not a precept that is not violated. Among the great masses of mankind, passion still seems to hold sway, and inclination and sinful desires

rule, in defiance of truth and justice. The daily papers are full of accounts of contracts broken, promises violated, and injustices done. Murders, suicides, robberies, drunkenness, fighting, quarreling, and unnatural crimes form an ever recurring list. While to these we must add the immeasurably greater number of crimes and abominations that are never detected by man, and that no government official can register or take note of, but which are known to God alone.

The world is, indeed, a hot bed of depravity of every kind. Well may St. John bid us "love not the world" (I. John ii. 15). Well may the Scripture warn us that "the world is the enemy of God."

But why is the world so wicked? Well, because men so soon lose sight of and forget the very purpose of life. They forget that this world is no real resting place, but a mere stepping stone to another, and that we "have not here a lasting city."

Faith has grown dim. The great spiritual world, by its very nature impervious to the senses, gradually fails to impress its brightness and its beauty on men's minds, and then little by little fades away and disappears from their consciences. Faith loses its hold, languishes, goes out, and leaves them in spiritual darkness.

Many talk and chatter as though faith were a thing of little moment. There was never so great a mistake. There is nothing so important in reality. Why? Faith rules the world. It is the most powerful factor we have to reckon with. It is a man's faith that determines his conduct. If you tamper with his creed you tamper with the whole of his life. A hand laid upon a man's creed is like a hand laid upon the rudder of a ship; the whole course of the ship is changed. A man is under the influence of his faith, almost as completely as a ship is under the influence of the rudder.

We are apt to attach too little importance to a person's inward faith. Why? Because we can not see it, as we can see his acts; we can not watch it as we may watch his conduct—or hear his words. It is, in short, not a measurable quality.

Yet it is just precisely that which is at the very root of the whole matter. It is invisible—true. But it is none the less active and energetic on that account. We do not see the main spring of our watch when we look at the hands to learn the time, yet the spring is the essential cause of their every movement. Indeed, all the greatest and most important forces of nature are invisible and impalpable. Take as an instance the force of gravity. What is more invisible, or more impervious to the senses, considered in itself?

Yet what plays so important a part in the whole physical universe? It is acting at every moment of time. It is acting at every point of space. Its influence is felt at once here in this very church, and in the most distant star. It controls equally the motions of the vastest planetary systems and the smallest particles of wandering dust. It determines the paths of gigantic suns no less than of each drop of falling rain. It is acting and influencing at all times every particle of matter of which all material things are composed. Yet it remains itself hidden and unperceived.

What gravity is in the physical order, that faith may be said to be in the moral and spiritual order. My acts, my conduct, my whole manner of life will be found to be, in a very marked and unmistakable manner, little more than the reflection of my faith.

It may be objected that it is reason that directs men. This is, of course, true. But reason can act only upon such *data* as are set before it. If the data be correct and sound, then reason, properly exercised, will lead me aright. But, observe, if the data be false, erroneous, or imperfect, then reason acting upon such false data will assuredly conduct me wrong; in fact, in that case, the more accurately I follow reason, the more surely and inevitably will it lead me hopelessly astray. It is like directing a ship by a compass that is disordered and out of gear.

Let me illustrate my meaning by an example—an example, alas! but too familiar nowadays. I refer to the sin of *suicide*.

A man commits the atrocious crime of self-destruction. It may indeed be said that he has violated reason; and truly. But why do we say so? Because we are supposing him to possess the Christian faith. We suppose he believes in God, who forbids self-destruction, also in the punishment due to the act; thirdly, in the duty of exercising patience and resignation under his trials and miseries, by which he may reap an eternal reward; and so forth.

But if, for the moment, we change our supposition, then the case at once assumes an entirely different complexion. Suppose the man who drowns, or poisons himself, has already persuaded himself that there is no God, no heaven and no hell. Suppose he is so lost to all sense of religion that he has at last succeeded in convincing himself that no hereafter exists, and that death ends all. In that case, why should he live one moment longer than he thinks desirable? Why should he prolong an existence which has lost all its charm? When once the balance of pain exceeds the balance of pleasure;

when once a continuation of life comes to mean only poverty, disappointment, disease, and shame. Why should he not end his existence? Why? Well, let us see. Shall we say, because God forbids self-destruction? But the wretch does not believe in God. Or shall we say, in order to merit by patience and longsuffering a higher place in heaven? But he denies that there is a heaven. Then may we not say: For fear of hell? No. For hell, to his mind, has no reality either. The simple fact is, that the absence of faith has removed all the solid motives that support a Christian. Reason remains, but has nothing to seize upon, no sufficient motive to influence it. When, therefore, he argues: "Life is only a burden; I will not carry it another step. I will throw it from me"; when he blows out life's brief candle before it is half burnt through, we must admit that *from his point of view*, erroneous though it be, criminal though it be, he has acted reasonably enough. It is not his reason that is at fault, it is his faith that has failed. What, then, is the cause of his suicide? Not the want of reason, but the want of true belief in God, in future judgment, in heaven and hell. If we once allow his premises and aver that what he holds is true, then to take his own life would be about the wisest thing he could do. Thus faith may be true, or it may be false, but whether true or false, it determines a man's line of action. So long as a man's faith is false, it must lead him to do wrong, for man acts, as a rule at least, according to his faith. There is, consequently, no real remedy but to restore to him this great theological virtue, "without which, it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6).

It is much the same as regards every other evil passion and propensity of corrupt nature. Faith, and all the doctrines that faith includes, supply us with motives, varied enough, and strong enough, to enable us to resist all sin. But if our faith become undermined we no longer stand on the solid rock, but rather on the unstable sand.

Take such sins as impurity, luxury, avarice, pride. Corrupt nature is prone to all these excesses. Nature clamors for indulgence in all that can feed its rebellious appetites. Why, then, do I resist? Well, the thought of the penalty of sin sobers me. The knowledge that a moment's sinful delight *here* will be followed by an eternity of agony *hereafter* steadies my too skipping spirit. The forfeiture of heaven and eternal joys makes me pause, and I put myself the question, is it worth my while to forfeit all for a moment's indulgence? Still more powerful will be the motive of love of God.

I will not outrage my infinite Benefactor—no! I can not bring myself to offend so merciful and loving a Saviour. I look at him in the stable of Bethlehem and I remember He became Man for my sake. I say with St. Paul, “He loved me and delivered himself for me” (Gal. ii. 20). I gaze at Him on the cross, and I feel how passionate that love was. Yes; He, the mighty God, sacrifices His own temporal life that I might possess eternal life. He dies that I might not die. And these thoughts, that faith has planted deep within me, steel my heart against temptation, and fortify my will, and infuse such a hatred of sin that at last I cry out, “No! never shall I break thy law, oh, God, never for anything in this world shall I ever offend Thee, the infinite, the uncreated, the eternal Goodness.” Truly faith holds me back, keeps me in check, gives me the mastery over my passions, and fixes and secures my resolution for good.

But what will stem the tempestuous torrent of passion where faith is dead! What will control the rebellious and wayward spirit of man when all these supernatural bulwarks have crumbled away?

If there be no God, no future, nothing to long for, and nothing to fear beyond the grave, who will put a curb on men’s passions? If they have no solid ground work of faith where will the restraining influence be found? Where will you place your lever?

If this life be all, why indeed *should* I restrain myself? Why should I not indulge every inclination to the full. Why should I consult anything but my own immediate pleasure and satisfaction? O! If this life be all, then give me full rein. Seek not to bridle my passions. Let me spend my brief day in dissipation, and joviality, and in amusements; in banqueting and carousing, and every form of luxuriousness.

If a man finds pleasure in living like a pig, and wallowing in the mire of sensuality and animal delights, who can blame him, *if this life be the sum total of his existence*. You, my brethren, and I may prefer to live like a philosopher—but tastes differ. *He* may prefer to live like a beast. Who will censure him? Pleasure is become the only law, the only guide. You find *your* pleasure in contemplating the stars; *he* thinks it more amusing to spend his days in a tavern, or a bawdy-house, and gratify his lowest animal propensities. Why is the one existence one whit better than another, if there be no eternal law, no immutable standard of right and wrong; no divine and supernatural sanction?

My brethren, the inevitable tendency of loss of faith is a loss of self-respect and of self-control. It is quite impossible that the enormously weighty motives that faith supplies can disappear without introducing an entire change in life and conduct, because, as I have pointed out, life and conduct are controlled by faith. To rob a man of faith, is to sap and undermine the very foundation of his morality, and to shiver into pieces the rock upon which he stands.

A strong, vivid, earnest faith is at the very root of the spiritual life, hence the Holy Spirit says, "The just man lives by faith" (Rom. i. 17). On the other hand the total absence of supernatural faith destroys the spiritual life, and opens the door to every iniquity.

But there is another state lying between these two; a state in which there is neither great vividness nor strength of faith, on the one hand, nor yet a total want of faith, on the other.

This, it is to be feared, is the condition of many of us Catholics. We possess faith, i. e., we really believe, but in such a cold, languid, unreal manner, that the result is often very much as though we did not believe at all.

Why is there so little fervor in our lives, so little desire to amend; so little anxiety to receive the sacraments frequently and to receive them fervently? So little shrinking from venial sin? It must all be traced in its ultimate analysis to a want of vivid faith; we believe, but we do not realize what we believe. It is one thing to know a doctrine to be true, it is another, and a very different thing, to bring home to ourselves practically and distinctly the import of that doctrine.

This is a fact clearly understood and acted on by the children of this world. We find manufacturers and tradesmen and sellers of various goods constantly acting upon this principle. A man, for instance, is anxious to sell a powder, or a soap, or other article of general consumption which he has invented. He knows it is not enough to boldly state its excellences, nor to enunciate its remarkable qualities in colorless words. If people are to be induced to buy it, they must not only know, they must be helped and aroused to realize and to discern these qualities. Hence instead of a printed notice, we meet pictorial ones. We look up at the boardings up and down the city and we see the representation of a blackamoor growing white under the influence of the soap; or a delicate and spotlessly clean hand is stretched out, holding a piece of soap, beneath

which runs the legend: "I never use any other!" Or perhaps it is some patent food for infants that is being thrust on the market. This is not merely recommended in a few printed lines, but an infant is represented devouring it with every expression of delight and satisfaction. The dish is empty and he is licking the spoon. Furthermore, he is made to look a perfect picture of health and strength, and as we examine the rounded, dimpled limbs, and admire their preternatural plumpness, we are very sensibly aided in our efforts to realize the admirable properties of this patent food. But why all this enormous additional expense? Why all this outlay of artistic talent? Simply and solely, my brethren, to impress the public more forcibly and vividly with a consciousness of the qualities of the goods, and to induce it to purchase them in greater quantities.

In one word, men are well aware that it is one thing to know and another to realize.

Well, dear brethren, if this is to some extent true as regards even the material things of earth, it is immeasurably more true as regards the great spiritual truths of faith, which are, by their very nature, invisible and intangible. If the teachings of faith are really to exercise a decided influence upon our lives, they must be vividly apprehended, and, in a sense, rendered visible. We must not merely offer a cold, passive assent, but we must set before us a graphic picture of what is meant. Then, but not before, will faith begin to work the wonders in us that it worked, and still works, in the saints.

Let me illustrate my meaning. I once knew a hardworking laboring man, who used habitually to neglect Mass on Sundays. One Sunday I went to his house about noon. He was still in bed. So I called again in the afternoon, and after a few preliminary remarks I said, "I am sorry to find you were not at Mass this morning." "No; I was very tired," he replied. That was his only excuse. He simply did not feel inclined. But I said, "You are a Catholic; you know, first, that God commands you to keep the Sunday holy and to hear Mass; second, that an eternal reward may be merited by the fulfilment of this duty; third, that an eternal punishment awaits all wilful breakers of the divine law; fourth, that you are doing a grievous wrong to your children, who are far more influenced by your example than by your words; and, fifth, that you are making an enemy of one who is infinitely powerful." I told him nothing that he had not heard before; nothing but what he already believed,

yet it was all to no purpose; he absented himself from Mass again the following Sunday.

Now observe, on the other hand, that Monday found him up before six, shouldering his tools, and on his way to his place of business, and by noon he had completed half a day's work. How are we to explain this? What is there so much more exhilarating in a Monday than in a Sunday? What induces him to conquer on a Monday the laziness that proves fatal on the Sunday? Why is he up and active at six on Monday, and abed even at midday on Sunday? Well! On Monday he gets up before sunrise, first, because he is unwilling to offend his earthly master and lose his employment, i. e., he thinks more of offending man than of offending God. Secondly, because he is promised a few shillings in wages, i. e., in other words, he esteems a few shillings in this life more highly than the eternal rewards of the next world. Thirdly, because he will suffer want and perhaps hunger unless he works, i. e., he dreads temporal want and hunger more than hell fire. Fourthly, because he can not see his children in want and starving, i. e., he thinks more of his children's temporal comfort than of their eternal interests.

Why do the *supernatural* motives influence him so little, and the *natural* motives so much? Are the supernatural motives of less force, less weighty *in themselves*? On the contrary, they are immeasurably more weighty—in fact, there is really no comparison. Then why do the less stir a man up, and force him to exert and to deny himself, while the greater can not move him at all? Because he does not, as a fact, realize the meaning of the very doctrines which he, as a Catholic, professes. He realizes what a day's wages are; he realizes the food and the drink, and the clothing that it will procure him; but he does not realize the greatness and majesty of God and His divine claims, nor the rewards in store for the good and the obedient.

He will do more for earth than for heaven; for time than for eternity, for the same reason that a silly little child, whose reason is not yet developed, will run across the room, and overcome its shyness when offered some gaudy, glittering toy formed of gold paper and tinsel, and will yet shrink away and sulk in a corner if asked to exchange it for a banknote of a thousand pounds. *We*, too, often fail to realize the infinite value of spiritual things, and prefer the tinsel of earth to the delights of heaven. Faith—sound faith, vivid faith, is the radical remedy for such a deplorable condition of mind,

I have chosen the case of a poor laboring man, but precisely the same truth holds good of the wealthiest and noblest in the land.

Take some vain woman of society. See her at her toilet table. She is about to be presented at court, and to enter the Queen's drawing-room at Buckingham Palace; or she has been invited to dine with the Prince or with some great nobleman, and all the élite of London are to be there. Now, observe, I am not saying a word against presentations, drawing-rooms, or state dinners. I dare say, many of the invited are most excellent and holy persons—perhaps some (though I am afraid not a very large number), like Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, even wear beneath their gorgeous robes a hair shirt, or a steel chain with sharp points, to mortify their flesh. But I am not aluding to such, no, I am speaking of a vain and worldly woman; and the species, I believe, is not yet wholly extinct. Such a one is preparing to attend a levée, or a banquet, or ball, or whatever it may be. See how anxious she is to look her best; how exceedingly careful she is in the arrangement of her dress; how important it is that it should be just exactly according to the latest fashion. Not a crease, not a stain must appear. Then her jewelry! Oh! that is very important. She will try on first one necklace, then another. She thinks the emerald one may suit her complexion; but no, for the diamond and pearl will best reflect her wealth and station. No; that won't do—she tries the sapphire with the gold pendants. Ah! yes! Now, *that* looks quite heavenly. And so she goes on, giving herself and all her attendants endless trouble and vexation. Then her hair, and her hands, and every feature is a subject of engrossing interest and anxiety to her; while the sums she has disbursed for the powders, the scents, the cosmetics, and the other objects now lying on her toilet table would keep a poor family in comfort for weeks.

Now, the question I wish to put to you is, why is this lady so much more anxious about the beauty of her body than about the beauty of her soul? How can we harmonize her extraordinary anxiety to please the vain eyes of men with her utter indifference about pleasing the divine eyes of God? How comes it that she will spend so much time, and trouble, and money to secure a temporary triumph, and to look pretty, attractive, and handsome for a couple of hours in a nobleman's drawing-room, and yet take no trouble whatever to look attractive and glorious and honorable in the sight of God and His holy angels? If a spot or a blotch or an unsightly

mark disfigures the fair features of her face, she is quite unhappy, and will take endless trouble to dislodge it. And yet, strange to say, she thinks little of the sins that stain her soul, of the blemishes that destroy the comeliness of her spiritual beauty. She will put herself to endless trouble to remove a disfiguring mole or eruption from her cheek, yet she will not even make use of the simple expedient of confession to wash herself clean from the leprosy of sin. Why is this? The explanation is ever the same. Her reprehensible conduct arises from a wan of lively faith in spiritual things. She believes in God, and would wax exceedingly wroth if you said she did not, but her faith is cold, dead, unappreciative and unreal.

Who, indeed, realizing the greatness and majesty of God, and the absolute nothingness of man, would, or indeed *could*, so act? Who in any degree conscious of the presence of God, would be at greater pains to please the servant than the Lord of all. Consider the grandeur and magnificence of the eternal King of everlasting glory. The pillars of heaven tremble before Him; the angels are not pure in His sight. Cherubim and Seraphim veil their faces and fall down in awe and adoration before that irresistible Power. The whole earth is to Him but as a grain of impalpable dust, or a drop of the morning dew. The constellations of stars that fill all space, and the vast suns rolling through the untold wastes of heaven are even, when all taken together, but an ignominious mote. "All things are before Him as though they were not." Who realizing, even faintly and dimly, His unspeakable greatness would turn their back upon Him, in order to seek the favor of men.

It would be impossible were faith lively, and its teachings clearly apprehended.

And similar reflections might be made concerning all the other acts of life. A clear perception of the great doctrines of the Church and a strong ardent faith will ever make for holiness and innocence of life. Seek a more intimate acquaintance with the invisible world; learn to judge of things as they are, and not as they appear, and it will introduce a marked improvement into life.

And how are we to acquire this vivid faith, which is at the root of all sanctity?

1. By earnestly imploring it of God, "Lord increase my faith" (Luke xvii. 5). "Ask and you shall receive" (John xvi. 24).
2. By thoughtful meditation and by dwelling in loving contemplation upon the mysteries of faith.

3. By reading books, treating of the various tenets of our faith. God will speak to our minds and flood our hearts with His divine light as we read. He always assists those who show themselves to be in earnest.

4. By exercising faith, making acts of faith, and striving to keep ever before the eyes of our souls the truths we profess.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

TEMPTATION AND HOW TO RESIST IT.

“Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil.”—Eph. vi. 11.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—I. How the devil deceives us during temptation. 1. He hides the evil of sin. 2. He says it is small. 3. He tells us we can not resist. 4. He leads us into presumption or despair. II. The faults we commit during temptation. 1. We are impatient and yield. 2. We yield because we have done so before. III. How to act during temptation. 1. We must renew our confidence in God. 2. We must be determined not to yield. 3. We must reject temptation instantly. God loves us to cling to Him. The devil hates us; have nothing to do with him. Think of heaven; think of hell.

Were this world, brethren, not a place of probation and trial, man might pass through it without being tempted. But precisely because it is the place where our moral worth has to be tested, and also because the devil hates us for being God's children and is bent upon our destruction, hence, if we wish to faithfully serve our Maker, we have to sustain one long-continued fight with temptation. Therefore, do the Holy Scriptures say to us: “Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear and prepare thy soul for temptation” (Eccles. ii. 1). We are warned, then, to be ever on our guard against temptation, to be ever ready to meet it, for if we wish to serve God, meet it we most certainly will. And “our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the spirits of wickedness in high places” (Eph. vi. 12). The valiant soldier who knows not on what side the enemy will attack him, is ever on the alert watching, and long before they come he has prepared himself to fight bravely, he has seen to his weapons, and when the enemy appear, he stands in the best posi-

tion he can find, fixed in the resolution not to yield, but to conquer or die. So must we soldiers of Christ act in this our spiritual warfare, and be fully prepared when the enemy—temptation—comes, and firmly resolved to die rather than yield. Let us study, then, the wiles of the devil when he tempts us, the failings that we exhibit in temptation, and finally, how we must conquer and overcome it.

I. 1. Man is born with all those passions, inclinations, and wants which fit him for the end of his creation, a life of bliss with God hereafter. But when we remember that man is made up of body and soul, we see that his great central passion of love needs careful ruling. For love induces man to unite himself to the good which he apprehends as such. But what is good, what are the proper objects for man to centre this great passion of his soul upon? This is a most important point in the life of man. God is infinitely good, and sanctity and holiness and the means to them are good. But, alas! man sometimes fixes his love upon that which is only apparently and not really good, which satisfy the cravings of the body instead of nobler and higher aspirations of the soul. Now the devil, with his keen intellect and vast experience, knows this, and hence his first artifice is to represent to us as good that which is in reality evil and wicked. He will tell the young man that the music in the drinking saloon is sweet; that the company therein is entertaining; that the drink is exhilarating and refreshing; and that he ought to go there and rest himself for a time. Thus does he represent what is apparently good, but he hides the fearful wickedness and evil which results. Drunkenness is the great curse of the age, and there are few vices that are not connected with it. Satan knows well how many thousands he has ruined by similar advice. Men and women have listened to him, they have gone to the saloons frequently, created a craving for drink, which they have satisfied. They fell again and again, and in the end became confirmed drunkards. The companions they found there were immoral, dishonest, irreligious; and, after a time, the young men and women who mixed with them became the same, and dying as such are now burning in hell. Behold, then, the first artifice of the tempter—he represents that which is most dangerous as good, and hides from us the most fearful consequence that follow from taking and yielding to his suggestion. Truly, “he is a liar, and the father of lies” and we never listen to him for a moment (cf. John viii. 44).

2. The next artifice of the devil is to insist that the sin is only a

small one. To the man entering the drink shop he will suggest that even if he does get just a little too much drink, it is only a venial sin, which will be easily pardoned. He does not say that the commission of many venial sins in the same species makes it most easy to fall into mortal sin; that when a man frequently takes just a little too much and his senses are inflamed, it is the easiest thing in the world to get entirely drunk. The tempter does not point out these things, just because his object is to make men sin mortally. Nor does he say that sin, even the smallest, is a great evil in the sight of God, that God punishes every one severely in purgatory if we die with it on our souls, and that it is a most dishonorable action of ours to deliberately offend our heavenly Father in any way. No; the devil hates God, he hates us, and he wants us to commit many venial sins so that we may glide easily into those that are mortal. We must be ever on our guard against this and refuse to commit even the smallest deliberate venial sin.

3. The next deceit of the evil one is to make the sinner think that he can not resist the temptation. When the man who was a moderate drinker has become a drunkard, and has now a strong and continual craving for drink, the devil will tell him that it is no use trying to keep sober, because he can not do it—he must satisfy his thirst. The “father of lies” hides the fact that man has a free will, that grace is poured upon us through prayer. Sinners sometimes say they can not help sinning. “The circumstances were difficult, the temptation sudden and strong; I have formed a habit, and I could not resist.” Such language we hear sometimes; but, granting that the temptation was strong and sudden, granting that we have fallen before, still it is utter folly to say we could not resist. For, argue as we will, we know that we have a choice, that we have the power of refusing to do what the devil suggests, since we have a free will, which we may use in spite of all the tempter urges. This fully proves that we can resist if we will, for by the use of it we decide every hour of the day what we will or will not do. Here it is that sin comes in, for sin is but deciding on any occasion to do that which we know to be wrong, or leave undone that which we ought to do. To say that we can not resist is untrue; to say that we do not conquer the temptation is because our will is not firm, but rather fickle and unstable. But have we not a most loving Father in heaven, who, if we ask, will strengthen us, will make our will firm, and give us the grace which will enable us to resist and conquer temptation. Has not God said,

“ Ask, and it shall be given you : seek, and you shall find : knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth : and he that seeketh, findeth : and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened ” (Matt. vii. 7, 8). Here, then, we have our Lord telling us to ask what we require, and the distinct promise that whatever we ask for, provided it be right, will be granted. There is nothing which God so much wishes us to do as to keep from sin, and if we ask Him for help to enable us to do so, we have His divine assurance that He will grant us that help. The drunkard and other sinners need not say they can not resist temptation. They can, if they will, obtain by prayer graces which will enable them to overcome even the strongest and most persevering temptation. But alas, as a rule, they do not pray when Satan tempts them, and hence they yield, and this is just what he requires. He being deceitful keeps them from prayer if he possibly can, and so they drink continually ; they obey him instead of God, and often die in their sins, and too late, in hell, they see through the lies, deceit, and treachery of the devil, and know then that they could have resisted had they wished to do so.

4. There are two other wiles of the devil which he often uses when he wishes to keep those who have fallen into his clutches all to himself. In the first case he fills their minds with an idea, which makes them speak in such language as this : “ God is merciful, and, no matter how many and great my sins are, He will pardon me whenever I ask Him.” So speaks the presumptuous man, and acting with this idea, he sins frequently and continues to do so for years, even to death. But what says God to such as these ? “ Because I called and you refused to hear, I stretched out my hand, and there was none that regarded, therefore, I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock, when that shall come to you which you feared. Then shall they call upon me and I will not hear ” (Prov. i. 24, 26, 28). These words, then, should strike terror into the presumptuous heart. Certainly God is merciful to sinners, but there is a time when justice will take the place of mercy, and then such sinners must be punished. Ah, how fearful the words : “ Then shall they call upon me and I will not hear ” (Prov. i. 28). Proud, habitual, presumptuous sinner, let these words sink deeply into your heart and never forget them. They are the words of God, who is truth, and they are just the very opposite to those of the devil, who “ is a liar and the father of lies ” (John viii. 44). The second artifice of Satan is to make men believe

that God will never forgive them. The drunkard falls many times; his craving for drink becomes stronger, and when repentance is mentioned he will answer: "What can I do? I can not overcome my fault, and I know God will not forgive such terrible sins as mine." Ah, how fearful! such a man relinquishes all hopes of salvation, and continues in his sins. How strange that such a sinner does not remember Magdalene, the penitent thief, St. Peter's fall, or the prodigal son! But what says God in answer to this lie of the devil? "If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, living he shall live and shall not die" (Ezech. xviii. 21). The infallible word of God assures us, therefore, that whenever the sinner truly repents, and turns to Him, in that hour he will be forgiven. Believe, then, neither the suggestion that you can go on and sin as long as you like, nor that your sins are too great for God to forgive; for these are two lies of the devil, which keep men in a state of sin, and should death come suddenly, their souls most likely would perish, and this is precisely what the devil wants. There is a middle course which we should follow, a course between these two extremes; we must work out our salvation with a filial fear of offending God, and with a firm trust that He will assist and help us in every way. Upon no account whatever remain in a state of grave sin; go at once and ask your Father to forgive you, and to help you not to sin again.

II. 1. To meet these artful wiles of Satan we must act most carefully at all times, but especially during temptation, when so much depends on how we act, and hence we must be most careful to make no mistakes. Yet there is one often made which is very common. There are some souls who fight bravely for a while; but if the tempter be persistent, they lose patience, become angry and yield. Need we say that such a mistake is very fatal? What would we think of a valiant soldier who in the end would have been victor only after a few moments he yielded to the enemy? Men would deem him foolish, and say that he deserved even the severest fate. And is it not a distrust of God, an insult to Him to yield, when, with a little courage, perseverance, and patience, we could, with the help of God's grace, have overcome the temptation, and have vanquished the tempter? We ourselves can see this afterward, and let us profit by this knowledge and remember it on future occasions.

2. The second fault is akin to despair. If we have fallen into any special kind of sin once or twice before, the next time the tempter

comes with the same suggestion we at once lay down our arms. This is most foolish; it is the greatest possible cowardice, and it shows that we neglect one of the most powerful helps possible in temptation; that is, we do not pray. Sinners often complain that they have not the power to resist temptation. Indeed this is very true if they trust to their own natural powers, but it is not true if they have recourse to prayer. St. Paul (I. Cor. x. 13) confirms this latter statement, and says: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." This is a most clear and most explicit assurance that we can, with the help of grace, overcome temptation, and God will give us an abundance of grace if we ask for it, if we pray when tempted.

III. 1. Knowing, then, Satan's wiles and our own faults during temptation, we must now see how to overcome and conquer it. Grasp firmly in your minds that temptation must come sooner or later, and that it is a matter of the utmost importance for us to overcome it. Remember also that it is not a matter which concerns us only, but that it also concerns the honor and homage we owe to God our Father. This shows us that God also has a great wish to help us during our temptations. And when we consider His goodness to mankind, His almighty power, and that He is truth itself, and has promised us every possible help, then our confidence in Him must be unbounded, and we must instantly, the moment temptation comes, turn to Him, and through true, earnest prayer seek His grace and assistance. He who loves us more than any mother loves her child will at once give us all the help we need to overcome the tempter. And the longer the temptation continues, the more persevering, the more frequent must be our prayers.

2. We have seen that we have a free will, by the use of which we decide what we shall do or not do. We must then do our utmost to make this will firm and immovable. We know well what stubborn people are; we often hear of them, perhaps we know them; nothing will turn such people, once they have made up their minds to do a certain thing. Well, we must be stubborn, we must be firmly determined that, come what will, we will never yield to temptation—we will suffer death first. Even if we are tempted to commit venial sin we will remember that a deliberate venial sin is a very dreadful evil, and on no account will we commit it.

3. We all know that even a small spark has led to the greatest

conflagrations, when the material upon which it fell was combustible. Now we are prone to sin, and temptation acts upon our proneness as a spark upon dry material. Hence we must cast it from us the very instant we see it. Not a moment must be lost, but we must quickly put it aside. We must not dally or play with temptation, for this is the most dangerous thing we can do. It was through this fault that the devil succeeded in bringing about the fall of our first parents. Always look upon the devil as your greatest enemy, and remember that he does not love you, but hates you intensely, and that he only tempts you to lead you to everlasting ruin. Hence have not the slightest contact with him. He is a liar, a deceiver, one to be avoided in every way. The very instant, then, your intellect or conscience tells you that any suggestion is his, then your will must decide that he must not be listened to in any way. Do not argue with him, do not believe him, for he is a liar and is deceitful. Do not think he loves you, for he hates you. Have nothing to say to him; when he comes in temptation, flee at once to God.

Brethren, when soldiers know how the enemy will attack them, they prepare accordingly, and are ready to meet their foes at every turn. The devil is your enemy, and you are soldiers of Christ. Satan is continually attacking us, and his weapons are lies and deceit. Never believe when he says sin is a trifle, heed him not when he tells you that you are powerless to resist; if he says, "God is merciful," answer, "God is also just"; even if you fall, God will forgive, provided you truly repent. During the battle of temptation be patient, and if you fall once or twice, despair not, but rise and renew your courage. Pray much, trust in God, and be determined in your own hearts, never on any account whatever to yield to the tempter's suggestions. Ah, brethren, did we fully realize how important it is for us to resist temptations; that it may mean for us the loss of heaven, and a miserable eternity in hell, we would be most careful, we would be determined never to yield to Satan, not even in the smallest trifle. Ah, take home with you this truth. "The devil is my deadly enemy; he hates me, he wishes to ruin me forever and to drag me to hell. But God loves me, and I ought to love Him, and I will cling to Him, and pray to Him for help at all times, but especially in temptation." Acting upon this truth, upon this thought, be ever on your guard, be ever careful, and: "Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil" (Eph. vi. 11).





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